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Winning With the Sicilian

MARK TAIMANOV

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Introduction

My Friend 'The Sicilian'

One cannot just consider the role and significance of the opening stage of a game in the modern chess struggle in isolation. Experience has shown that the results of the opening battle, with one of the sides winning even a small positional or material advantage in the early stages, can be transformed by the pure technical equipment of the skilled chess-player to be a determining influence on the whole course of subsequent events, carrying on into the middlegame, and at times, the endgame. Figuratively speaking, the opening is the seed, the shoots of which grow on every part of the chessboard and yield the harvest in complete dependence on the original groundwork.

The higher the class of the chess-player, the depth of his strategic conceptions, the variety of his tactical and technical resources which are used in the process of the chess

battle, the more important the factors of the opening ideas become, the more principled the theoretical dispute.

As World Champion Gary Kasparov has suggested: 'A contest between high class chess-players often becomes a proving ground for the testing of new ideas, where the opponents try to prove the truth of their opening conceptions. And evidently, a victory in such a theoretical duel is essentially determining the success of the battle as a whole.'

This is why an acute concern of every chessplayer about his opening repertoire runs through all the years of his perfection in the art of chess and serves as a prevalent element of his analytical work and practical preparation. Of course, an opening repertoire is put together, formed, crystallized and honed according to established rules in every stage of the player's development.

At the outset of a player's career the first moves of the opening generally bear an accidental character — the taste of the amateur is omnivorous and special opening attachments have not yet been developed — he plays any position with equal interest. But once a basic grasp of the game is acquired, its strategic rules and tactical possibilities, every chessplayer gradually conceives his own subjective criteria of factors in the war of chess and in accordance with his character and temperament develops his own style. An inclination arises either towards peaceful play of the 'positional' type, or towards dashing combinatorial attacks, to strategical or tactical methods of creative self-expression, this individual approach leading to a preference towards positions of a closed, semi-closed or open character, according to taste. There is now a period of formation of individual ideology, style of play, in short, of a creative credo of a chessplayer, and he purposefully tries to dictate the choice of opening scheme and construction. Moreover, the necessity arises to formulate a solid and not too broad repertoire, which will allow him to develop his own individual creative traits to the maximum — 'A chessplayer cannot and must not play all the

openings known to theory,' advises Mikhail Botvinnik, 'for 3–4 opening systems are quite sufficient for White in one match and the same number for Black. But these systems must be well prepared.' This means that the chessplayer, having set himself serious goals, should pay some attention to research work. And this work is capacious, diverse and ... endless, for it lasts through one's entire creative life. Max Euwe once described it as 'Titanic'.

It is also apparent that to understand the secrets of any opening one must gather the relevant information, continually adding to it, study specialist theoretical literature, examine a great number of positions, research all possible ramifications on the basis of past experience and only then begins the most interesting and fascinating part of knowledge — the search and development of new independent ideas and plans. Through this comes the mastery of opening systems, which allows one to successfully plan in the arising and changing circumstances on the board and make expedient decisions even during a surprising or unforeseen turn of events.

The creative credo of the author of this book was also formed according to such a scheme. Half

a century of an active chess life set against the background of achievements and inevitable failures, my joys and disappointments were shaped not only by my chess tastes, persuasions and style, but also by the 'endurance' of hundreds of tests of my thoroughly researched opening repertoire. The alterations to it from year to year went from quantity to quality, from width to depth of understanding. And finally, as Botvinnik also advises, White retains 3–4 opening schemes in his armoury and Black much the same, but they are mastered and, mainly 'felt', as they say, 'to the bottom of the heart'.

The Sicilian Defence became one of the leaders in this 'select circle'. Perhaps, it was namely this opening scheme that initiated the

attention, interest, keenness, and finally, loyalty of the author. This staunch friendship of the 'Sicilian' has already lasted at least four decades and although certain other attractions have appeared on the creative path from time to time (French and Spanish) my global attachment is unchanged.

In this book the author sets out, on the basis of his rich practical experience and with broad analytical deductions, to open up before the reader the fascinating world of Sicilian ideas and problems, leading him into the creative thoughts of a Grandmaster, where strategic directions and concrete paths of development are investigated in one of the richest openings of modern times — the Sicilian Defence.

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1 The Sicilian Defence

A Few Words About Our 'Heroine'

The 'Sicilian' is a lady of age. Her 'christening' may date towards the beginning of the XVII century. History suggests that in the year 1617 the Italian chessplayer Pietro Carrera, a Sicilian by origin, was first to introduce the initial moves 1 e4 c5 in his treatise of openings and this gave the Englishman Sar-ratt the grounds, at a somewhat later time, to name the embryonic opening the 'Sicilian Defence'. At first the 'Sicilian' did not form a reputation — it was considered to be a bad opening for Black, and it only became used more than a hundred years later after the efforts of that great Frenchman La Bourdonnais, who successfully tested it in his match with Mac-Donnell in 1834; it won for him a solid position in the demanding world of opening theory (1 e4 c5 2 f4 e6 3 ♖f3 d5 4 e5 was then considered to be the main vari-

ation, not however presenting Black with serious problems). Significant, by way of illustration, is the evaluation given by the eminent Russian theoretician Jaenisch in his book, dated 1842: 'The move 1 ... c5 is in our opinion the best reply to 1 e4!'

The eminent maestros of the nineteenth century Andersen and Paulsen added impulse to the developments of the Sicilian Defence, proposing original paths and plans of counterplay for Black. It is significant that right up to the present day one of the most modern systems in the Sicilian Defence bears the name of its first initiator Louis Paulsen. But in the whole of the last century, the defence came under the banner of open opening schemes and was not evaluated according to the merits of the depth and creative potential that we nowadays associate with the Sicilian Defence. Full recognition only arrived in

our century, and particularly more recently, as the inquisitive chess nature of the researcher has led to a more critical approach, not being satisfied with the classical aspects of Black being assigned the primary role of defender, but starting to persistently search for opening systems where the orderly strategical balance may be broken, and wider possibilities in the fight for the initiative would be revealed for both sides. The asymmetrical Sicilian Defence could not answer these demands better.

An era of multilateral research began into the strategical and tactical dynamics of the Sicilian structures, the development of this rich opening being, as they say, 'broad and deep'. One harmonious system after another arose, diverse according to their own principled directions, strategical problems and character of the game. New paths were built and the Sicilian Defence found a powerful analytical foundation which guaranteed the stability of its theoretical evaluation.

The most prominent Grandmasters of the last decade have taken the 'Sicilian Defence' into their armoury and included it in their opening repertoire. Suffice to say that its most prominent interpreters have been (some as Black, some as White) almost all World

Champions. For each one of them the Sicilian Defence has turned out to be some sort of special attractive frontier, so far as the main divisions of the opening ('the Paulsen system', 'the Scheveningen variation', 'the Dragon variation', 'the Rauzer and Sozin attacks', 'the Najdorf variation', 'the Taimanov system', 'the Sveshnikov or Pelikan variation', 'the Closed variation' and other branchings) are full of content, providing great scope for the fantasies of chess-players with the most diverse creative aspirations. Dynamism — this is the main magnetic force of the 'Sicilian'. As Anatoly Karpov aptly put it: 'The Sicilian Defence is an opening of special stock. Here the fate of the game is often decided before the players have deployed half of their pieces.'

Of course, the research of an opening comes in two forms — the search for more expedient ways of developing the initiative for White, and at the same time, with no less intensity — adequate reactions based on creating counterplay for Black.

As a result the Sicilian Defence has become one of the most developed openings of our time and occupies a most worthy place in the list of openings which open boundless possibilities for valuable creative conflict.

Sources of Personal Tastes

I was acquainted with the Sicilian Defence even in my youth, playing, as did also all of my contemporaries, practically every opening. Perhaps, at first it attracted even less of my attention than, say, the Spanish game and other opening schemes. My enthusiasm arrived somewhat later, when my sporting ambitions were already determined and the necessity arose to equip my repertoire with 'shock' openings, suitable for sharply intensifying play in critical tournament situations. I began, as is usual, with the study of one of the sharpest variations — the Dragon variation, but my attempts 'to follow one's heart' to this system were unsuccessful: my kingside often smashed before I had succeeded in developing active operations on the queenside — apparently not having been able to fathom the secrets of this complex system. Then I switched over to the Boleslavsky variation with its unusual strategical content and felt drawn to the dynamics of this original opening conception. The Boleslavsky variation has been part of my repertoire for some time, bringing some success, but the choice of this or another system depends not only on one's own desires (especially when defending as Black), but also, to a significant

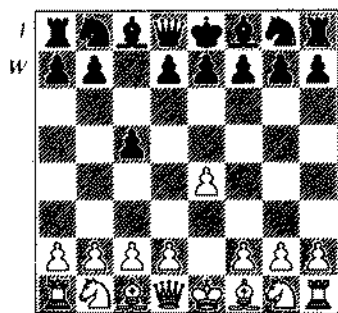
degree, on the tastes of one's opponent. When the potential of White's active strategical ideas in the Boleslavsky variation dried up little by little, the more aggressive Rauzer and Sozin attacks came as replacements to this scheme. Thus my Sicilian 're-training' came about and, it must be said, also a full creative gratification. If you play one and the same variation for a long time, even if it is attractive according to its strategical content, like it or not at some time a period of satiety will dawn with a desire to 'change the record'. The natural evolution of opinions is also of significance. Every chess-player tries to fully express his creative credo, in terms of perfection, and new opening experiences become necessities. In short, the Rauzer attack and the Sozin attack firstly alternated with the 'Boleslavsky variation', but thereupon these new lines occupied a dominating part in my repertoire.

Many fascinating games were played with these complex variations, there being periods of fortunate analytical searches and finds, but also inevitable disappointments, though overall the conceptions were vindicated. Nevertheless the dialectic of the development of every opening is such that the more it gains in reputation the more diligently and

carefully it is selected as a 'key' to other aspects. Such also occurred with Black's possibilities in the Rauzer attack. Little by little, but unflinchingly, theoreticians and apologists of White in this variation found solid paths to neutralize the intended counterplay, bringing successes to the attacking side so that adherents of Black naturally began to deplete in number. I had to rebuild once more. This was now difficult, but ... obligatory. I confess, it didn't take long to choose — the Scheveningen set-up was not too much in my spirit, sharp 'slide-rule' variations of the Najdorf or Pelikan type are clearly not my strength, so my interest was focussed on the flexible and versatile Paulsen construction. Here, perhaps, my creative aspects, now of a mature period, found most abundant grounds for self-expression. The Paulsen does not make the most demands in the solving of strategic problems, but its elasticity makes it simple for opening fantasy, allowing one to vary plans and embrace the widest sphere of opening ideas. Now, within the bounds of these constructions, I succeeded not only in researching and improving many popular variations, but also in laying new paths, gradually formulating a harmonious opening scheme,

taken into literature under the name of the Taimanov system. By perfecting my understanding of the Paulsen system and my 'trade mark' system and alternating their usage, this turned out to be sufficient opening equipment for me over many years, so as to be able to fearlessly withstand, as a whole not unsuccessfully, the attacks of my rivals (supporters of the knightly opening 1 e4) and conduct fascinating theoretical and practical discourses with them. I happily take the opportunity to share my reflections with the reader on the basis of the multitude of games played, analyses and evaluations of the principled systems of the Sicilian Defence where I can consider myself an expert and originator.

Sicilian Motifs



The first question, which is asked in any conversation about the Sicilian Defence is semantic — how

are the strategical features determined and originality attached to this opening? The first move which characterizes the Sicilian Defence is already an interesting ploy — 1 ... c5 in reply to 1 e4 bears with it the seed of opening conflict.

Black does not oppose the white pawn in the centre, 'the official' of the opponent, as he does in, say, open games, the Queen's Gambit and symmetrical variations of the English Opening and does not present himself with urgent aims connected with the speedy mobilization of his forces peculiar to, say, the Nimzo-Indian Defence or the King's Indian Defence. Black's main goal is otherwise — not to resist his opponent's intentions to seize space in the centre with his pawns but to attack a strikingly pronounced asymmetrical character to the play, where the advantage of the advance may be compensated by some other specific opening achievements. So, for example, if White, as is usual, carries out the d4 advance happily conquering space, then after the exchange of the flank c-pawn for the central d-pawn Black not only formally possesses an extra pawn in the centre but, significantly, obtains the semi-open c-file at his disposal, which is no minor factor for the prospective development of operations on the queenside. If

White instead refrains from such an active plan of expanding his central influence and prefers the idea of slow development of his forces along the lines of the Closed Variation (2 ♘c3), then Black is able to increase his influence on the d4 square by way of the development of his knight on c6 with an eventual fianchetto of his bishop along the h8-a1 diagonal and obtain equal chances in the centre.

Motifs of the Sicilian include active pawn operations on the queenside with the help of the b- and a-pawns, whilst a timely counter-thrust in the centre with the d- or e-pawns is also characteristic in many variations.

In short, the dramatic sharpness underlying the Sicilian Defence embraces a broad spectrum of ideas and plans, based on the dynamic features of the pawn structure. Departing from this somewhat scholastic reasoning, I shall present other arguments.

I remember my flippant evaluation of the opening problems in my youthful years, expressed by one of my colleagues — a Master:

'I don't understand,' he said, 'how White can be permitted to play so carelessly in the opening of a game? First of all he advances a central pawn to the undefended e4 square; whereupon, as a rule, he exchanges his d-pawn, which

from the d3 square could still have defended its audacious neighbour; and to crown it all he hastens into advancing his f-pawn two squares also, forfeiting the central stronghold of his last cover and condemning the recklessly thrust e4 pawn to its inevitable fate ...'

Of course, here White's customarily sharp opening steps have been comically exaggerated — each of the named programmed pawn advances contains inner expedience and evident energy. But a grain of truth in these evaluations can also be perceived. It is often the central e4 pawn that becomes the subject of concern, and when it has to advance it frequently unmasks the a8-h1 diagonal where Black, with the aid of his light-squared bishop, sometimes linking up with the queen, succeeds in developing significant pressure. Interestingly, in 1841 the great Staunton, in the magazine 'The Chess Players'

Chronicle', also evaluated the idea of the d2-d4 advance as quite mistaken!

The c2 pawn fundamentally also becomes an Achilles' heel for White in the Sicilian construction; it is positioned on the open c-file, which White voluntarily places at his opponent's disposal for the sake of achieving his own opening objective — the conquering of space in the centre, the mobilization of his forces on the d-file and the free development of his pieces. So with these dialectic contrasts there are mutually characteristic peculiarities and potentially rich chances for both sides in the Sicilian Defence.

For familiarity with my own ideals, I present this book to the reader in the same order in which I comprehended the secrets of this opening myself.

The then fascinating Rauzer attack became my very first Sicilian passion.

2 The Rauzer Attack

Who is Quicker?

Among the various strategic conceptions which determine the character of the chess fight in the realms of the Sicilian Defence, one of the most principled, interesting and double-edged is the flank attack theme with castling on opposite wings. It is the most concrete and dynamic theme, demanding from each player not only resourcefulness and fantasy, but also boldness and energy in the realization of his plans. The motive of a headlong mutual flank storm permeates many systems of the Sicilian Defence, but perhaps the Dragon variation and the Rauzer attack determine the struggle with the finest clarity and most categorically. In my experiences I have had many troubles, joys and griefs defending Black's position in these schemes, and especially remember certain games which were played in the style of hand to hand combat, using the pre-

termined strategic ideas which were developed in the time of the famous Soviet analyst, Rauzer.

Vsevolod Alfredovich Rauzer did not have a long life — only 33 years — but his greatest contribution as a chessplayer was as a researcher. He was a Master, having at times achieved good results in multi-Union competitions and fully deserved his reputation as a strong practician, but his main reputation in the history of chess was his work as a theoretician. Rauzer was obsessive as an analyst and his creative fantasy prompted him into surprising discoveries. He believed, from a subjectively paradoxical argument, that the advantage of the first move should yield a tangible advantage with an energetic treatment of the opening. It would seem that Rauzer wanted to demonstrate that in the initial chess position, as in a study, one could formulate the task — 'White to play and win!'

Of course, this is an intentional exaggeration, but in pursuing his ideals Rauzer was actually able to find many original strategic ideas, which have significantly enriched White's active resources in a string of open and semi-open openings. His deeply thought out plans of seizing the initiative in the Spanish, French Defence and Sicilian Defence have passed the test of time having, for half a century, stimulated the theoretical mind and are still important points in the repertoires of many of the world's strongest chessplayers. The Rauzer attack has proved to be one of the most interesting and theoretically rich openings in modern chess.

Nezhmetdinov-Taimanov
USSR Ch. Semi-Final, 1951

1	e4	c5
2	gf3	dc6
3	d4	cxd4
4	xd4	df6
5	dc3	d6
6	dg5	

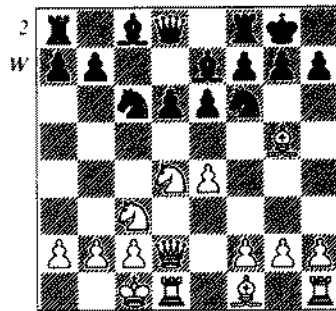
This thrust is the introduction to the plan of development proposed by Rauzer. White speedily mobilizes his queenside pieces. The other continuations 6 dc2 or 6 dc4 are usually associated with the preparation to castle short and bear a more restrained character.

6	...	e6
7	wd2	de7

The alternative 7 ... a6 is dealt with in a later annotated game.

8	0-0-0	0-0
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The variation on the theme — 8 ... xd4 9 wxd4 0-0 is approximately equal (see the game Tolush-Taimanov below).



The critical position of the Rauzer attack, bearing with it a dramatic charge of enormous dynamic force, since castling on opposite wings usually leads to uncompromising 'hand to hand' combat.

At first glance, this opening formation is undoubtedly favourable for White — he has an advantage in space and in development, an active position in the centre and significant pressure along the d-file where, moreover, his opponent has a backward pawn. However, (again an 'intricacy' of the Sicilian set-up!) the situation on the board should by no means be considered

to be simple. Black, although only developed on the third rank and somewhat cramped in his scope of operations, nevertheless is not faced with any difficulties with the development of his pieces, and, very importantly, has his 'zone' under control. Besides which, taking into account the intended mutual flank operations, he has an important 'trump' in the semi-open c-file, directed at the cover of the white king, while his own king is situated in sufficient safety.

9	db3
---	-----

An instructive moment. It would seem that White can try to directly utilize his influence on the d-file by way of 9 dxf6 dxf6 (of course 9 ... gf would be extremely risky for Black) 10 dxc6 bc 11 wxd6 . However, in positions with opposite-side castling material gains costing the concession of the initiative are not justified strategically and are usually fraught with dangerous consequences. So also here — after 11 ... wb6! 12 wg3 db8 Black's initiative finds real contours and White must be reconciled with the worse position after 13 b3 dxc3 14 wxc3 wxf2 .

According to the same motives the thrust 9 bdb5 is of no use to White. After 9 ... wa5 10 dxf6 dxf6 11 dxd6 (11 wxd6? dg5+ 12 cb1 d8 13 wa3 dxd1+ 14 dxd1 wd2!) 11 ... d8 12 f4 e5!

13 wd5 wc7 14 f5 d4 15 bdb5 wa5 16 wc4 dxf5! 17 ef dac8 , Black obtains an attack which amply compensates for the sacrificed material. For example, 18 wa4 wa4 19 dxa4 db3+! 20 ab dg5+ and White has to think about saving the game. Typical variations!

The text move (9 db3) looks somewhat inconsequential and insipid, but it has its own logical strategic foundations. Above all, White avoids the simplifying exchanges which are possible, say, after 9 de2 or 9 f4 (we will examine these later in concrete examples), but besides this, he prophylactically strengthens the defensive covering force of his own king — in particular retaining some control of the a5 point, via which the Black pieces often approach the cover of the castled position.

Apart from all this the concrete positional threat of 10 dxf6 is created, since now 10 ... dxf6 winning a pawn by way of 11 wxd6 is not associated with any risk for White. For example, 9 ... a6 10 dxf6 dxf6 (of course on 10 ... gf the Black king becomes vulnerable) 11 wxd6 wb6 12 f4!? and 12 ... dxc3 13 bc we3+ 14 cb2 wxe4 is not possible due to 15 d3 with the subsequent 16 dxc7+!

9 ... ♖b6?

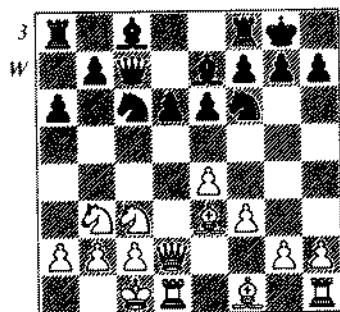
Thanks to this tactical possibility (10 ♗xf6?! ♗xf6 11 ♖xd6 ♖xf2), Black gains time for the manoeuvre ... ♗d8 and successfully solves his immediate problem — solid cover of the d6 pawn.

10 f3

With such methods White not only strengthens his central outpost, but also prepares for a king-side pawnstorm. The continuation 10 ♗e3 ♖c7 11 f3 (11 ♖b5?! ♖b8 12 ♗xd6 ♗xd6 13 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 14 ♗xd6 ♗xe4) 11 ... a6 12 g4 only leads to a transposition of moves. The continuations 10 ♗xf6 and 10 ♗f4 have independent significance. The first of these is examined in the next example; the other is well-known, as in the game Goldin-Taimanov (USSR 1951) and leads after 10 ... ♗d8 11 ♖e1 a6 12 ♗d3 ♖c7 13 ♗g1 b5 14 g4 b4 15 ♗e2 a5 to a typical structure of mutual flank attacks, where Black's chances look more preferable — the white knights on the queenside play a minor role, 'draw fire on themselves', and the Bishop on g5 only hampers White's dynamic pawn offensive.

10 ... a6
11 ♗e3 ♖c7

The opening is concluded. Both sides have brought the majority of their pieces to convenient pos-



itions, 'concealed' their king behind a solid pawn barrier and fortified their position in the centre. The asymmetry of castling now becomes the principal feature of the position which determines the appropriate plans. In such cases mutual flank attacks find special acuteness and dynamism, whereupon an *avant-garde* offensive may be mounted by the 'infantry' free from the responsibility of shielding their own 'high command'. Success is also determined by the purposefulness of the action, the concreteness of the tactical operations and attentiveness to the counterplay of one's opponent in any all-out storm. Thus,

12 g4 b5
13 g5 ♗d7
14 f4

White is first to cross the demarcation line and hurries towards the shelter of the enemy king, but a direct confrontation is still far

away, since Black's pawn chain does not have any flaws.

14 ... ♗b6!?

An instructive moment. 14 ... b4 would be an impulsive decision, but in this case after 15 ♗a4 Black's active resources would come up against a blockade. It is therefore necessary to firstly regroup one's forces. A motto for the offensive is 'hot heart, but cold mind!'

15 ♖f2 ♗b8
16 h4 ♗a4!?

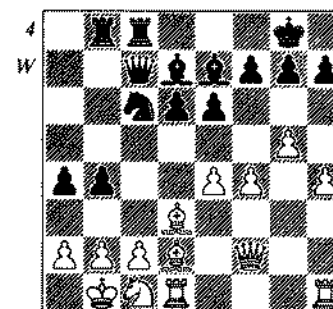
And again a non-stereotyped decision! Although the advance 16 ... b4 would be more well-founded (17 ♗e2 ♗c4!?), on this one would have to contend with the simplifying operation 17 ♗xb6 ♖xb6 18 ♖xb6 ♗xb6 19 ♗a4 ♗b8 20 ♗g2, depriving Black of any ambitious hopes. In any case the knight manoeuvre contains more 'venom'.

17 ♗d2

Necessary. In the event of 17 ♗xa4 ba the open b- and c-files would be extremely dangerous for White.

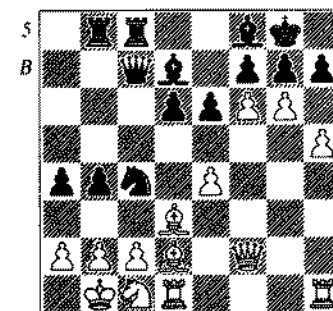
17 ... ♗xc3
18 ♗xc3 b4
19 ♗d2 a5
20 ♖b1 a4
21 ♗c1 ♗d7
22 ♗d3 ♗fc8

As a result of the latest successful operations Black has managed to



balance the rhythm of the mutual pawn storms and to vitalize the position to the utmost. The question now of whose attack is the most effective will be literally decided by a tempo. Each opponent sets all of his trumps into motion with the next moves.

23 h5 ♗a5
24 f5 ♗c4
25 f6 ♗f8
26 g6!



The triumph of White's assault! It would seem that having stolen up to the very threshold of the black king's shelter his 'infantry'

must inflict a rout in the enemy camp, but as the subsequent course of the battle and deeper analysis of the position shows, such an impression is deceptive, and things for Black are by no means so lamentable as they may appear at first glance. What is the secret here? White's attack is not so effective now for two reasons — first of all, his pieces are positioned far from the centre of events, and, importantly, Black's position is very solid and the opening of lines for a direct strike does not succeed. True, precise counterplay is demanded from Black.

26 ... ♖c5!

Only so! Offering the exchange of White's main attacking piece, Black gains valuable time for the important redeployment of his forces and simultaneously gains a tempo for the counter-attack.

27 gxh7+?!

As often happens in tense contests, at the decisive moment someone fails in objectivity. In no way does White wish to be reconciled with the wrecked illusion of his mating attack but then, after lengthy thought, he came to the conclusion that retaining queens, and those planned threats to the black king, would not yield an advantage (on the tempting 27 ♖g2 one would have to contend with the counterblows

27 ... a3 or 27 ... ♜d4). White should voluntarily simply exchange the main forces 27 ♖xc5 ♜xd2+ (27 ... ♜xc5 is worse due to 28 gf+ ♜xf7 29 ♙xc4 ♜xc4 30 fg ♙xg7 31 ♜fd1+) 28 ♜xd2 ♜xc5 29 gf+ (29 h6!? gf! 30 g7 ♙e7) 29 ... ♜xf7 30 fg ♙xg7 31 e5!? forcing the transition to a level ending.

This would have been the worthy and logical conclusion to a fascinating contest.

The dubious text move gives Black the initiative.

27 ... ♜h8!?

One should pay some attention to this method. Practice shows that sometimes one can use not only one's own pawns for the king's cover but also those of one's opponent. Clearly, Black would come under direct fire in the event of 27 ... ♜xh7?

28 ♖xc5

The queens have to be exchanged in less favourable circumstances than on the previous move.

28 ... ♜xc5

29 ♙f4

Having lost the thread of his strategic plan, White begins to stumble at each step. By continuing 29 ♙xc4 ♜xc4 30 fg+ ♙xg7 31 ♙f4, White might still achieve a satisfactory outcome to the battle.

29 ... gxf6

30 ♜e2 ♜e5

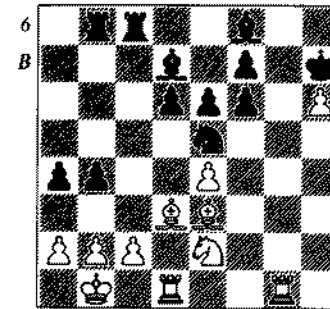
The knight, happy to have kept its life, imperiously intrudes into the course of events.

31 ♙e3 ♜5c8

32 ♜hg1 ♜xh7

As a result Black has an extra pawn with an excellent position. The rest is now a matter of simple technique.

33 h6



33 ... b3!

Finally the black infantry steals up to the enemy king, and with the support of the heavy artillery! Events now develop quickly.

34 cxb3 axb3

35 a3 ♜xd3

36 ♜xd3 ♙b5

37 ♜d2 ♜c2!

38 ♜f4 ♜xd2

39 ♙xd2 ♙xh6

40 ♜h1 ♜g7

41 ♜xe6+ fxe6

42 ♙xh6+ ♜g6

43 ♙f4 e5
44 ♜g1+ ♜f7
45 ♙d2 ♙d3+

and White resigned.

A fascinating, typical Sicilian battle. What sort of conclusions can one draw on the basis of this game?

Firstly, with castling on opposite sides flank attacks usually become sharper and more dangerous, so far as the pawns link up with the advanced forces to attack the position of the enemy king.

Secondly, for a successful combination of attack and defence, whenever possible, one should avoid weakening the structure of the pawn cover of one's own king, taking into account that pawns possess their greatest durability on their original squares, and any advance by them would facilitate a confrontation of forces advantageous to the opposition.

Thirdly, success comes to the player who utilizes his resources the more purposefully and energetically.

Fourthly, when attacking one should not forget about the opponent's threats and, whenever possible, should rationally combine aggression with caution.

Fifthly, one radical way of weakening the opponent's onslaught is through simplifying ex-

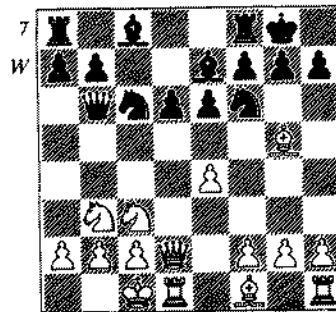
changes, if this is possible without serious positional concessions.

And, finally, one should not 'bury oneself' when attacking by unnecessarily 'burning one's own bridges' — positional principles must not be sacrificed for emotion.

These points will become clearer with the examples which are examined below.

Suetin-Taimanov
Leningrad 1951

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| 1 | e4 | c5 |
| 2 | ♟f3 | ♞c6 |
| 3 | d4 | exd4 |
| 4 | ♞xd4 | ♟f6 |
| 5 | ♞c3 | d6 |
| 6 | ♙g5 | e6 |
| 7 | ♞d2 | ♙e7 |
| 8 | 0-0-0 | 0-0 |
| 9 | ♞b3 | ♞b6 |



The reader is already familiar with this position from the previous game. There White played 10 f3, which is acknowledged by

theory as the more advisable plan — another route is tested in this example.

10 ♙xf6?!

A highly straightforward decision, based on the knowledge that the reply 10... g5 is connected with obvious risk because of the weakening of the castled position. Suetin tries to exploit the weakness of the d6 pawn, but, as the subsequent course of events shows, this idea has major defects and is refuted tactically.

10 ... ♙xf6

11 ♞a4

It was precisely on this thrust that White had placed his hopes. Of course 11... ♞xd6 is not good in view of 11... ♞xf2.

11 ... ♞c7

12 f4

The course has to be switched. Only now does Suetin realize that the planned 12 ♞xd6 does not work in view of 12... ♙g5+ 13 ♟b1 ♞d8! But this opening miscalculation leads to serious consequences ...

12 ... ♞d8

13 g4 a6

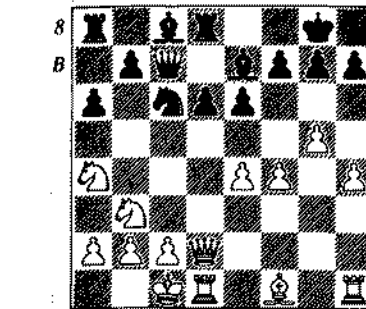
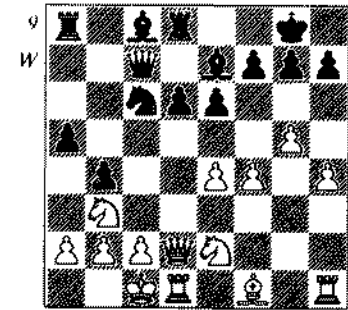
14 g5 ♙e7

15 h4

White's position is highly attractive at first glance. Although tactical operations regarding the capture of the d6 pawn have not worked, in full accordance with

has no dark-squared bishop and is not hitting the b6 square.

17 ... a5



the general plan of the chosen variation, White is the first to begin a pawn storm against the enemy castled position and seizes a great deal of space. The offensive looks impressive, but its potential is not great. As is now apparent to the reader well-versed in the previous example, advanced pawns not supported by pieces do not guarantee the success of a campaign, as White's forces are now disunited and find themselves far from the main area of the events. Moreover, the position of his knight on the edge of the board is also quite disharmonious and it is namely this circumstance which has the most significance in the current situation.

15 ... b5

16 ♞c3 b4

17 ♞e2

17 ♞a4 is inadvisable due to 17... ♙d7 and the knight's position is extremely unstable. In contrast to the preceding example, White

It now becomes clear that the Black offensive break has turned out to be more successful than that of his opponent. His pieces are prepared to support the pawn offensive, and the semi-open c-file promises to be an additional resource for the attack. In the first instance, the advances 18... a4 and 19... b3! are threatened.

18 ♞bd4 ♙b7

19 ♙g2 d5!?

Making use of the advantages of his position Black broadens the operational front, bringing into the attack the only piece which is still situated outside the active zone.

20 e5

Forced. In the event of 20 ed ♞xd4 21 ♞xd4 ♙xd5, the open play would only emphasize White's disharmonious formation.

20 ... a4
21 ♖b1!?

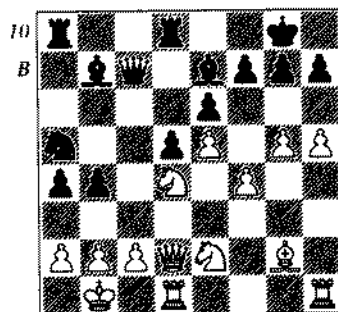
White should have exchanged in order to lessen the threat of 21 ... b3 (one must always remember this method!). By means of 21 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 22 ♔d4 (and if 22 ... b3 then 23 ♖b1!?) the defence may still have been held.

21 ... ♗a5

A typical Sicilian manoeuvre, significantly energizing Black's offensive.

22 h5

Here, when every tempo is of account, moves regarding 'general considerations' are inappropriate. It would have been better to have either switched over to the defence completely by way of 22 ♔c1, relying for the moment on the king's solid pawn cover, or to launch a desperate counter-attack by way of 22 g6! and if 22 ... hg, only then 23 h5!?



22 ... b3!

Black wins the race for a frontal

breakthrough and is the first to undertake hand to hand combat in hostile territory. In many similar positions this is also the decisive factor for success.

23 cxb3

There is not sufficient time for White to contemplate a counter-attack. On 23 g6 there could have followed 23 ... ba+ 24 ♖a1 ♔c4 and Black's attack is irresistible. True, now White's position is also unenviable.

23 ... axb3

24 axb3 ♗b6

25 ♔c1 ♗b4

26 ♗d3 ♗a6

Black's pieces find themselves with full scope — they have the main files and diagonals at their disposal, even on the decisive battle sector! It is impossible to withstand such an onslaught.

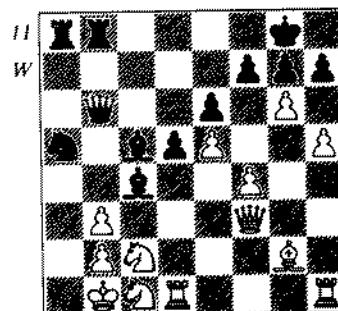
27 ♗f3 ♗c5!?

28 ♔4c2 ♗db8

29 g6

Alas, too late.

29 ... ♗c4!



A colourful picture — Black's entire army participates in the attack on the White king! The rest is clear without notes!

30 gxf7+ ♖f8

31 ♔a1 ♗e3!

32 ♗h3 ♔xb3

33 ♔axb3 ♗xb3

34 ♗d2 ♗a5

35 ♔xb3 ♗xb3

White resigned.

This game emphasizes the vital importance of time during mutual flank attacks. It is true to say, in such contests 'delay may mean death'.

The role of dynamism and speed in attacks against oppositely positioned kings is graphically demonstrated in the next game.

Tolush-Taimanov
USSR Ch. 1958

1 e4 c5

2 ♔f3 ♔c6

3 d4 cxd4

4 ♔xd4 ♔f6

5 ♔c3 d6

6 ♗g5 e6

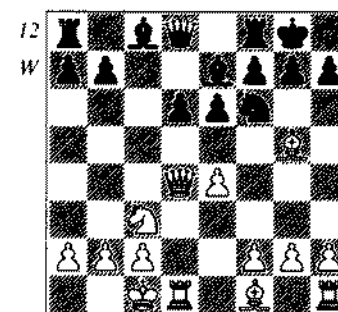
7 ♗d2 ♗e7

8 0-0-0 ♔xd4

One of the subtle variations of which practical experience has shown the value. The early exchange in the centre limits White in his choice of plans in the battle for the initiative, which is very

broad on the relatively unsophisticated 8 ... 0-0.

9 ♗xd4 0-0



We now have the familiar situation of opposite castling, but in another setting. In contrast to the previous game, the early exchange of knights has caused a lessening of tension in the centre and the reduction in the dramatic potential of the position. However, the general strategic motif has not changed — flank attacks remain as the main motives of the impending struggle, but the central break e4-e5 appears among the new resources White has of developing the initiative, while Black has the possibility of an active thrust of the queen to a5.

10 f4

This position also often arises after a different move order (8 ... 0-0 9 f4 ♔xd4 10 ♗xd4) and is regarded as characteristic in the highly developed theory of the

Sicilian. The possibility of the pawn break e4–e5 supplements the usual arsenal of ways that White has of fighting for the initiative, but it should be held in reserve. So, for example, the straightforward opening of play by way of 10 e5 de 11 ♖xe5 would be premature since after 11 ... ♗d7 12 h4 (or 12 ♗d3 ♘g4!?) 12 ... ♗c8 Black obtains a fully level game.

Evidently, in the light of the store of impressions of the games so far examined, in which White became disadvantageously tempted by the winning of a pawn, he should avoid this path since in the event of 10 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 11 ♖xd6 ♗a5 he comes under attack.

10 ... ♗h6?!

An instructive moment — Black breaks one of the principal strategic rules, which says that, without a concrete tactical motive, one must not weaken the pawn structure on the part of the board which is chosen for active operations by one's opponent. All the more so with opposite castling; for such an error retribution inevitably ensues.

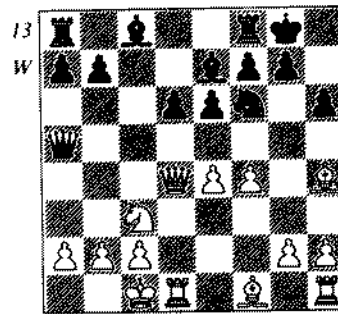
The normal 10 ... ♗a5 would have been the correct continuation, which is examined in the next example.

11 ♗h4

Here again pursuit of the pawn

by way of 11 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 12 ♖xd6 would be inadvisable. After 12 ... ♗a5 13 e5 ♗d8 14 ♗a3 ♗xd1+ 15 ♘xd1 ♗xa3 16 ba ♗e7 Black has fully sufficient compensation for the insignificant material loss, the more so as the white queenside pawns are weak.

11 ... ♗a5



This interesting position has been encountered repeatedly in my experience. The following plans did not have to be repulsed! — 12 e5 de 13 ♖xe5 ♖xe5 14 fe ♘d5 15 ♗xe7 ♘xe7 16 ♗d3 (Ivkov–Taimanov, Yugoslavia–USSR 1956); 12 ♗c4 e5 13 fe de 14 ♖d3 ♖c5 15 ♗xf6 ♗xf6 16 ♘b1 ♗e6 17 ♗xe6 fe 18 ♖d6 ♖c4!? (Gligoric–Taimanov, Stockholm 1952); and 12 ♗e2 e5 13 ♖f2 ef (I don't even recall against whom now!); and each time did not encounter any difficulties. In any event, I did not have to suffer the consequences

for the weakness of my kingside pawn chain — play basically went on in the centre. But my deserved 'punishment day' finally came ...

12 ♖g1!?

An original, sharp and profound idea! White not only deprives his opponent of his intended counterplay, associated with the energetic advance e5 (on which 13 f5! would now follow with great force), but more importantly prepares the speedy lunge of the g-pawn through which, with the presence of a convenient target in Black's camp (the pawn on h6) splendid attacking prospects are promised.

I recall how this manoeuvre forced me to regret my tenth move ...

12 ... ♗d7

13 g4 ♗c6

14 ♗e1!?

Again an interesting manoeuvre, characteristic of the distinctive creative style of Alexander Tolush. White not only drives away the black queen from an active position (the threat of the ♘d5 thrust in various situations may be extremely unpleasant), but also frees the way for his h-pawn to link up in the attack with tempo. The direct 14 g5 promises nothing if only because of 14 ... ♘e8!?

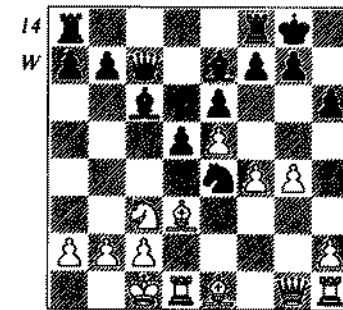
14 ... ♖c7

15 ♗d3 d5

Black has clearly not achieved

his intended play on the queenside and is forced to search for other methods by which to deflect his opponent from his contemplated pawn storm of the black king's castled position. The text move at the same time adheres to the classical formula — answer your opponent's flank operations with a counterblow in the centre!

16 e5 ♘e4



Black has succeeded in gaining a foothold in the centre and even creates the positional threat of a bishop invasion via c5 and e3. This is, of course, a definite achievement, but it cannot compensate for the organic defects of the black king's pawn shield and if White had not allowed himself to be diverted from his general offensive plan, but had continued with the consistent 17 h4! he would have made it very difficult for Black.

This appraisal would not be altered by some material gains, possible after 17 ... ♗c5 18 ♖h2

♖xc3 (or 18 ... ♗e3+ 19 ♖b1 ♖xc3+ 20 ♗xc3 d4 21 ♗b4 ♗xh1 22 ♚xh1) 19 ♗xc3 d4 20 ♗d2 ♗xh1 21 ♚xh1.

With the absence of counterplay Black would be doomed to dismal defence.

But the actual course of events took a different turn ...

17 ♗xe4?!

How a chessplayer of Tolush's sharply attacking style often overestimates the attacking resources of his opponent and hurries to crush him in the corner! This is why (and in no way is it the fear of losing the exchange) he unflinchingly exchanges the black knight which is 'irritating' with its activity. But this impulsive decision sharply affects the rhythm of his attack and the situation on the board changes fundamentally.

17 ... ♗xe4

18 h4 ♗b5!?

Suddenly Black's play finds dynamism. Without the light-squared d3 bishop, imprudently exchanged by his opponent, Black now becomes less afraid of the break 19 g5 in view of 19 ... h5 and, turning the tables, opens the path for a queenside pawn storm. Could Black have dreamt of such a metamorphosis a few moves ago?!

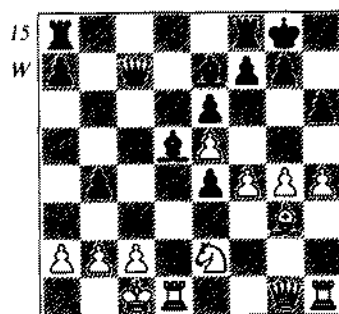
19 ♗g3

19 ♗e3 b4 20 ♖xe4 does not serve in view of 20 ... ♗b7! 21

♚d4 ♚ad8.

19 ... ♗b4

20 ♖e2 ♗d5!



Black's initiative develops quickly. He not only threatens the straightforward 21 ... ♗xa2, but also 21 ... ♗c4 or 21 ... ♚fc8. It is evident that White's position is close to being critical.

21 ♚xd5!?

In any case, the best practical chance. With the sacrifice of the exchange Tolush not only repels the immediate danger and breaks up the rhythm of his opponent's attack, but also sharply changes the character of the struggle, which always has its own psychological advantages.

21 ... ♗xd5

22 ♗d1 ♚fd8?!

Tolush's calculations are justified. Instead of trying to develop a winning initiative on the queenside, Black is diverted to the defence of his material acquisitions, and ...

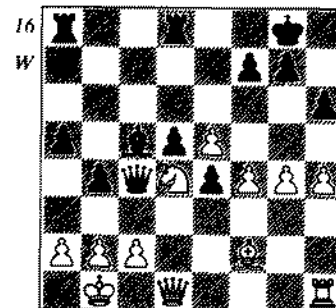
let's slip the lion's share of the advantage. More in the spirit of the position would be the energetic 22 ... ♗c5 23 ♗xd5 ♗e3+ 24 ♖b1 ♚ad8 25 ♗xe4 ♚d2! with dangerous threats to the white king.

As so often in chess, 'mercenary' considerations destroy the dynamics of the attack!

23 ♖d4 ♗c4

24 ♖b1 ♗c5

25 ♗f2 a5



26 g5!

Exploiting the short respite, granted at the price of the exchange sacrifice by the materialism of his opponent (22 ... ♚fd8?), at the first opportunity Tolush resumes his thematic pawn storm on the kingside. The struggle intensifies once more.

26 ... h5

27 e6!

Tolush is in his element! By deflecting the f7 pawn he creates

a powerful wedge in the immediate proximity of the black king and begins to create threats.

27 ... ♗xe6

28 g6 ♗a4?!

This tactical slip is not accidental, however, with such a dramatic development of events. It is as if Black has forgotten about the radical method of neutralizing the opponent's initiative — the exchange of attacking forces. By continuing 28 ... ♗xd4 29 ♗xd4 e3! he may have disrupted White's attacking potential again with a pawn sacrifice and then seize the initiative himself by positive means. For example, 30 ♗xe3 ♗e4!; or 30 ♚e1 a4! 31 ♚xe3 ♚f8 32 ♗e5 ♚f5 and Black has a clear advantage in both cases.

29 ♖xe6!

In truth I had not foreseen this showy move. On 29 ... ♗xf2 — 30 ♗xh5 decides. The number of times the 'spirit of attack' triumphs over crude material in this game!

29 ... d4

31 f5!

Onward only!

It is already evident that the pursuit of material gain contradicts the logic of events. In the case of 30 ♖xd8 ♚xd8 31 ♗xh5 e3! the picture changes sharply again.

30 ... d3

There is nothing else left now.

A piece must be given up in the search for diversionary counterplay.

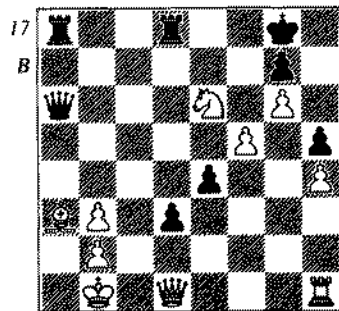
31 ♗xc5 b3

A despairing attempt to complicate play. With 31 ... ♜xc2+ 32 ♜xc2 dc+ 33 ♜xc2 ♞d5 34 ♗d4! matters would lead into a simple technical phase without any hope for Black.

32 cxb3

Perhaps it would be simpler to play 32 cd ♜xd3+ (32 ... ♞xd3? 33 ♜xh5) 33 ♜xd3 ♞xd3 34 ♞e1, though here the choice of paths to victory is determined by creative factors. Tolush always searches for tactical solutions, even if some risk is involved.

32 ... axb3
33 axb3 ♜a6
34 ♗a3



34 ... d2!

How rich indeed is the content of double-edged play on both flanks! Even when it seems as though all the resources have been

exhausted, 'impossible possibilities' are found. Here also if White were to venture 35 ♜xh5 (with 'unstoppable' mate!) ... he would be mated first after 35 ... ♜d3+ 36 ♜a2 ♞xa3+! Of course, Tolush sidesteps this trap.

35 ♗xd8 ♜d3+
36 ♜a2 e3
37 ♞h2

With 37 ♜xh5 one would again have to contend with 37 ... ♞xa3+ 38 ♜xa3 ♜d6+, although 37 f6! would be the most decisive continuation.

37 ... ♜xd8

37 ... ♞b8 looks tempting, but the fine combination 38 f6! gf 39 ♗c6! ♜xb3+!? 40 ♜xb3 ♞xb3 41 ♗e7+ ♜h8 42 g7+! ♜xg7 43 ♗f5+ and 44 ♗xe3! wins.

38 f6!

Only thus! As before 38 ♜xh5 would be dangerously answered by 38 ... ♞xa3+!

38 ... gxf6
39 ♜xh5 ♞a7
40 ♞h1 ♜d3
41 ♜c5!

Now at last all is clear! There follows:

41 ... ♞xa3+
42 ♜xa3 d1(♜)
43 ♞xd1 ♜xd1
44 ♜e7

and Black resigned.

An instructive contest, once again underlining how during

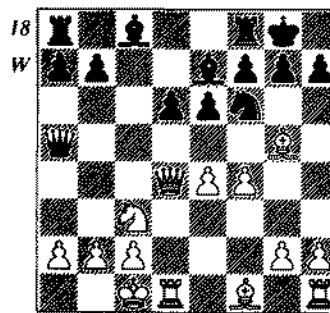
mutual flank attacks speed and purposefulness of operations can be more important than material gain.

As Tolush has remarked 'Loss of time in sharp positions is the route to doom.'

Here is an example of piece attacks on opposite wings, also often encountered in this variation of the 'Rauzer Attack'.

Keres-Taimanov
USSR Ch. 1952

1 e4 e5
2 ♗f3 ♗c6
3 d4 cxd4
4 ♗xd4 ♗f6
5 ♗c3 d6
6 ♗g5 e6
7 ♜d2 ♗e7
8 0-0-0 ♗xd4
9 ♜xd4 0-0
10 f4 ♜a5



The reader is by now well-acquainted with this interesting

position after seeing the preceding games. There, true enough, the moves h7-h6 and ♗h4 were included, which, as we discovered only complicated Black's problems, but the general strategic conception remains unchanged: for White — either play in the centre with his e4-e5 trump or an attack on the kingside; for Black — counterplay against the queenside, which will sooner or later involve play on the c-file, or tactical operations in the centre with the aid of the break e6-e5.

In the first instance, naturally, the choice must be made by White, and in practice many methods of fighting for the initiative have been tried.

Here are the main ones:

(a) 11 e5 de 12 ♜xe5 ♜xe5 13 fe ♗d5 14 ♗e7 ♗xe7 15 ♗d3, but Black, with the means of 15 ... b6!? 16 ♗e4 ♞b8 17 ♞he1 ♗b7 18 ♞d7 ♗xe4 19 ♞xe4 ♗c6 20 ♞d6 ♞fc8!?, neutralizes White's initiative (Tsheshkovsky-Yudasin, Minsk 1982).

(b) 11 ♜b1 h6 (here this move has a tactical basis — on 12 ♗h4 Black achieves a comfortable game immediately with the central thrust 12 ... e5) 12 h4!? ♞d8!? (accepting the piece sacrifice would be very risky. After 12 ... hg 13 hg ♗g4 14 ♗e2 e5 15 ♗d5! ♜d8 16 ♜g1!? White's attack, associ-

ated with the threat of 17 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 18 ♖h2, was shown in the game Belyavsky–Tsheshkovsky, USSR 1981, to be very dangerous) 13 g4 e5!? 14 ♖g1 ef 15 ♖xf6 (if 15 ♖xf4 then the simple 15 ... ♖xg4) 15 ... ♖xf6 16 ♖d5 ♖e5 17 g5 h5 (also worthy of consideration is the simplifying 17 ... ♖e6 18 gh ♖xd5 19 ed ♖b6) 18 ♖c4 (18 g6!? is better) 18 ... g6 and White is not left with a hint of initiative (Boivshev–Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1952).

(c) 11 ♖c4 ♖d7 12 e5 (or 12 ♖b3 ♖c6 13 ♖hf1 h6!? 14 ♖h4 ♖h5 15 ♖g3 d5!? 16 ed ♖fd8 and Black has everything in order) 12 ... de 13 fe ♖c6!? (extra evidence of the advantage of the move 10 ... ♖a5 over 10 ... h6) 14 ♖d2 (or 14 h4 ♖c5 15 ♖f4 ♖h5 16 ♖g4 g6 with mutual chances) 14 ... ♖d7 15 ♖d5 ♖d8 16 ♖xe7+ ♖xe7 17 ♖he1 ♖fc8 and although White has a spacial advantage on his side, Black has attractive counter-chances (Karpov–Ungureanu, Skopje, 1972).

These examples of the variation graphically demonstrate the variety of possibilities in the structure examined. They characterize the broad spectrum of ideas of plans for both sides.

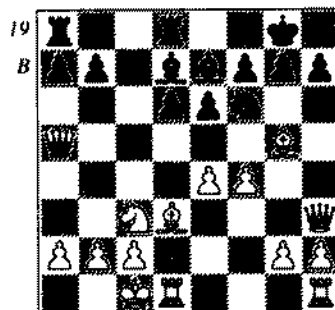
A more interesting try to breathe new life into this well-analysed position is undertaken in the text

game by that searching artist of chess, the late Paul Keres.

11 ♖d3!?

An original conception! The obvious goal of this unusual manoeuvre is the neutralization of Black's active resources associated with the break 11 ... e5, on which 12 f5 would now follow with the advantage. But Keres' idea is more profound: he intends to transfer his queen to the kingside in order to create a piece attack against Black's castled position.

11 ... ♖d8
12 ♖h3 ♖d7
13 ♖d3



Keres' plan has crystallized — White's pieces are unequivocally aimed at the black king and concrete tactical threats arise, for example, 14 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 15 e5.

13 ... ♖ac8!?

This bold move, directed at counter-attack, is not only objec-

tively best in this position, but also has a psychologically subjective foundation — it testifies to Black's reluctance to submit to the will of his opponent and go over to defence. The move calls for precise calculation of the variations.

Here are some of them — 14 e5 de 15 ♖xh7+ (or 15 ♖xf6 ♖xf6 16 ♖xh7+ ♖f8) 15 ... ♖f8 and now:

(a) 16 ♖d3 ef 17 ♖h8+ ♖g8 18 ♖xe7+ (if 18 ♖h7, then 18 ... ♖xg5 19 ♖xd7!? ♖xd7 20 ♖xg8+ ♖e7 21 ♖xc8 f3+ 22 ♖b1 fg 23 ♖g1 ♖c7 and Black wins) 18 ... ♖xe7 19 ♖xg7 ♖f6 with excellent play for Black;

(b) 16 ♖e4 ♖xc3! 17 ♖h8+ ♖g8 18 ♖xe7+ (18 bc f6!) 18 ... ♖xe7 19 ♖h4+ ♖f6 20 bc ♖xc3 and the chances are only on the side of Black.

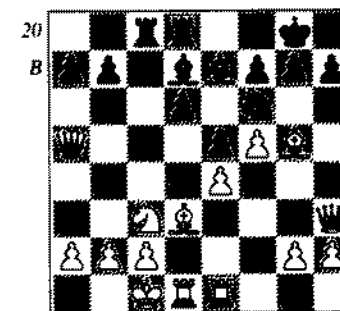
So, with faith in the stability of the Sicilian 'covering forces', Black succeeds in avoiding panic and retains the rhythm of his counter-play, a factor which is so important in double-edged positions.

14 ♖he1

Convinced of the correctness of Black's idea Keres does not force matters, but moves up his reserves in order to reinforce the threat of 15 e5. But it is Black's turn to move ...

14 ... e5!

15 f5



15 ... ♖xc3!

Exactly at the right time! This thematic sacrifice removes all the dangers.

16 bxc3

The alternative 16 ♖d2 is interesting, but it meets with a refutation — 16 ... ♖xd3 17 ♖xa5 ♖xh3 18 ♖xd8 ♖xd8 19 gh ♖e7 and Black's three minor pieces are stronger than the two rooks.

16 ... ♖xc3

16 ... d5!? gives nothing in view of 17 ♖b1!?

17 ♖b1!? ♖b4+

18 ♖a1 ♖c3+

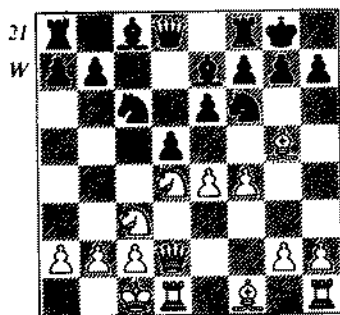
Draw agreed.

This game emphasizes that Black also has sufficient resources in a mutual flank attack with pieces — the c-file plays its role!

The following instructive example testifies to the significance of this trump even in more peaceful situations.

I. Kashdan—M. Taimanov
USSR v USA, Moscow 1955

1	e4	c5
2	♟f3	♞c6
3	d4	cxd4
4	♞xd4	♟f6
5	♞c3	d6
6	♙g5	e6
7	♞d2	♙e7
8	0-0-0	0-0
9	f4	d5!?



The reader has had the chance from the games examined above to satisfy himself of how rich the content of the 'Rauzer Attack' structure really is and how wide a scope for variety in one's plans there is even based on just one main theme — castling on opposite sides. There saw mutual pawn storms and piece attacks on the position of the enemy king and double-edged skirmishes in the centre (e4–e5 for White and e6–e5 for Black) with the resources of the position nevertheless far from

exhausted. The text game gives an example of yet another strategical idea which is possible with the pawn structure of the variation — the break d6–d5, this being an active reserve for Black in many ramifications of the Sicilian Defence.

10 e5

Of course, by simply closing the centre 'tight' and conquering more space White can try to highlight the shady side of Black's idea, which also leads to a further restriction to the mobility of the light-squared bishop on c8 and the renouncing of any later pawn influence on White's major piece outpost at d4. White gains nothing by opening up play with the aim of exerting pressure on the d-file. For example:

(a) 10 ed ed 11 ♞b3 ♙b4! 12 ♙e2 ♙f5 13 ♙f3 ♞ac8! and despite the evident weakness of the d5 pawn, Black, thanks to his active pieces (especially on the c-file!) has a fully equal game (Marjanovic–Mochialov, Minsk 1982);

(b) 10 ♞b3 de 11 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12 ♞xe4 ♞xd2+ 13 ♞xd2 ♙d8! 14 ♙e2 ♙b6 15 ♞ec5 e5! 16 fe ♞xe5 17 ♞d5 ♞e8 18 ♙b5 ♞e7 19 ♞e1 ♙c7 and Black has excellent prospects in a complicated end-game thanks to his pair of influential bishops. (Corall–Taimanov, Hastings 1955/56).

10 ... ♞d7

A surprising opening metamorphosis has occurred on the board — the double-edged Sicilian formation has acquired pure 'French' contours, where it is as though the fixed pawn chains disrupt the tempo of the development of events. But the essence of the global strategic problems confronted by the two sides is unchanged: opposite castling has led to flank operations.

11 h4

Natural, but apparently not the most energetic way of developing the initiative. So far as Black's castled position has no defects at the moment, a pawn storm here is slow and less advisable than a piece assault. As practice has shown, White is best served by reorganizing according to the scheme — ♟f3, ♙d3 with the subsequent transfer of the queen to the kingside. For example:

(a) 11 ♟f3 ♞b6 (or 11 ... ♙xg5 12 ♞xg5 ♞b6 13 ♙d3 h6 14 ♟f3) 12 ♙d3 ♙d7 13 ♞e3! and the threat 14 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 15 ♙xh7+ ♟xh7 16 ♟g5+ secures the initiative for White;

(b) 11 ♙xe7 ♞xe7 12 ♟f3 ♞b6 13 ♞e1 (or 13 ♞f2, as Bronstein has played here) 13 ... ♙d7 14 ♙d3 f5 (15 ♙xh7+ is threatened and on 15 ... h6 there is the strong 16 h4) 15 ef ♞xf6 16 g3 and,

by combining threats against the black king with positional pressure in the centre, White achieves a good position (Matanovic–Minev, Maribor 1967).

11 ... ♞b6

The plan of Black's counterplay is connected with a regrouping of forces by means of ... ♞b6, ... ♙d7, ... ♞c8 and subsequently ... ♙a5 when possible. Refraining from this purposeful manoeuvring would be risky; as you are already aware every tempo is of account with opposite-side castling.

An example of this is the game Stein–Taimanov (Sarajevo 1967), where after 11 ... a6! 12 ♟f3! f6 13 ef ♞xf6 14 ♙d3 Black soon found himself in a dangerous situation.

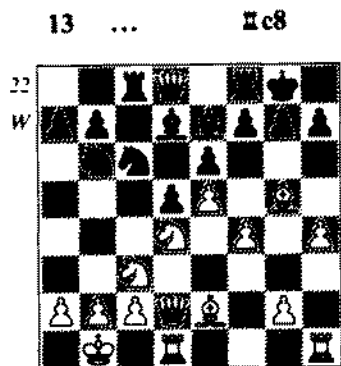
12 ♙e2

'Consistent' development of the pawn offensive by way of 12 g4 would be 'striking thin air', since a concrete method of ramming the fortified castled position is not yet possible. But time is very dear, instead of a limp developing move, relying on 'general considerations', it would be better to play 12 ♟f3 here, with a subsequent 13 ♙d3, which would retain the initiative for White.

12 ... ♙d7

13 ♟b1!?

But this is now simply an unforced loss of time.



It is obvious that by consistently implementing his plan, based on the possibility of active operations along the c-file, Black has been allowed to outstrip his indecisive opponent in the creation of concrete preconditions for the development of an initiative. The thematic manoeuvre 14 ... ♘a5 is now threatened.

14 ♘cb5

Apparently the American Grandmaster has placed his hopes on the tempting transfer of his knight to d6. However the queenside 'belongs' to Black in this opening and he is invulnerable on this part of the board.

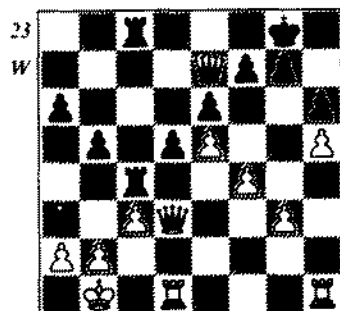
14 ... a6
15 ♘d6 ♖c7
16 ♗xe7

The tension has to be broken — 16 ... f6 was the threat here. So we see that 11 h4 has turned out to be superfluous.

16 ... ♗xe7
17 ♗e3 ♘c8!?
18 ♘xc8 ♖xc8
19 ♗d3 ♘d4
20 ♗xd4 ♗b5!?

The crowning of Black's strategy. All of his opponent's active pieces have been exchanged, and his main trump — the c-file — is shown to have all the more significance.

21 c3 ♗xd3+
22 ♗xd3 ♖c4
23 g3 b5
24 h5 h6



A text-book position. White's strategic battle is lost: he has no resources of active play whatsoever, whilst Black dominates in 'his' sphere — the queenside. There is, in essence, a purely technical phase ahead.

25 ♖hf1 b4!?

A typical ploy — the white king's cover has been weakened by the advance of pawns (remember? — the best defensive

covering force for the king is the initial pawn structure), and this allows Black to widen his sphere of influence with yet another open file.

26 cxb4 ♗xb4
27 ♖c1 ♖b8
28 ♖c2 ♖xc2
29 ♗xc2 ♗a3!
30 ♖g1 ♗f3
31 ♗c7!?

The very experienced Kashdan displays great stubbornness in a difficult position. He sets two immediate traps with the text move — 31 ... ♖xb2+?! 32 ♗xb2 ♗f2+ 33 ♗b3 ♗xg1 34 ♗c8+ ♗h7 35 ♗c2+; and 31 ... ♖b4 32 ♗c8+ ♗h7 33 ♗c2+ ♖e4 34 ♖e1! and White achieves his desired draw in both cases.

31 ... ♗d3+
32 ♗a1 ♖b4
33 ♗c3!? ♗b5
34 b3!?

On the immediate 34 ♗c8+ ♗h7 35 ♗c2+ ♖e4 36 ♖e1, there is the strong reply 36 ... ♗c4. Black must now contend with this positional threat.

34 ... ♖e4
35 ♖e1 ♖xe1+
36 ♗xe1

Kashdan's ingenious defence not only repels the direct strike, but also manages to exchange rooks, thereby simplifying his problems. But the queen ending also

remains dangerous for White — the black queen is very active.

36 ... ♗d3
37 ♗b2 ♗f3
38 b4 ♗xh5
39 a4 ♗f3
40 b5

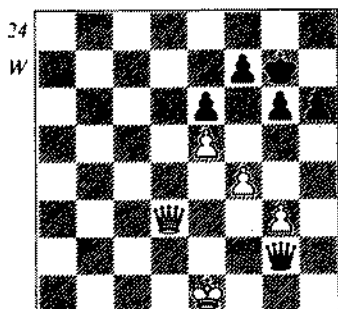
It is well-known that in queen endings the quantity is not so important as the quality of pawns and the American Grandmaster quickly creates a passed pawn. This is undoubtedly his best chance.

40 ... axb5
41 axb5 d4

And Black is not outdone ... The d-pawn is no worse than the b-pawn and their exchange is in prospect.

42 ♗d2 ♗f1
43 ♗a5 ♗e2+
44 ♗c1 d3
45 ♗d2 ♗e4
46 b6 ♗c6+
47 ♗d1 ♗xb6
48 ♗xd3 ♗g1+
49 ♗e2 ♗g2+
50 ♗e1 g6
51 ♗e3 ♗h7
52 ♗d3 ♗g7

This position promises Black excellent chances of victory — he has an extra pawn and an active queen, whilst White has no kind of counterplay available and must patiently await the unavoidable



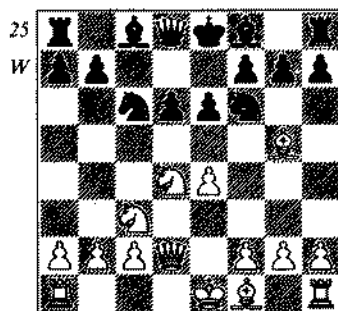
opening up of play, whereby the black king will come into the zone of accessibility.

White has no more than a practical chance of a draw which, with accurate and technically precise play by Black, should not play a major role. Nevertheless the game concluded in a draw ... At some moment, in the region of seventy moves, Black broke his vigilance and a near win was let slip. But I won't tire the reader with the details of this quite monotonous ending. Moreover, it deviates from the bounds of our theme. The game though turned out to be instructive so far as even fixed pawn chains, which are generally not characteristic of the Sicilian pattern, do not alter the principal strategic character of the position of opposite-sided castling, in which energy and speed during the implementation of flank operations and the purposefulness of those operations, drawing on all

the available major 'trumps', are the relevant factors of success.

Can One Go Without Castling?

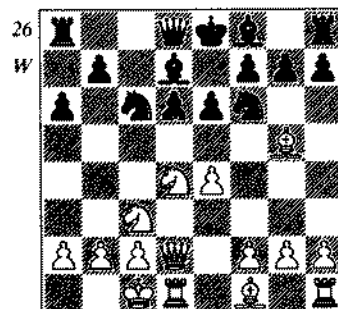
- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1 | e4 | c5 |
| 2 | ♘f3 | ♙c6 |
| 3 | d4 | ♞xd4 |
| 4 | ♙xd4 | ♘f6 |
| 5 | ♙c3 | d6 |
| 6 | ♙g5 | e6 |
| 7 | ♙d2 | |



Again the starting position of the 'Rauzer Attack', which has excited the creative mind for several decades now. It has given stimulus to the research of the many global problems of modern strategy and has particularly heightened the understanding of the value of time and dynamism in the development of the initiative. Examples of games with opposite-sided castling underline the significance of literally every tempo during flank operations.

From among the search for methods of utilizing the time factor arises the idea of the possibility of the development of a flank initiative by Black even before the completion of the mobilization of his forces, this economy also involving delayed castling. In positions of the semi-closed type, theory suggests, the retention of the king in the centre is not so risky, as long as the pawn cover is extremely solid, whilst the force for the developing attack by Black on the queenside can also often manage without the kingside pieces. So yet another double-edged variation has come into common practice, which has further enriched the arsenal of active methods in the Rauzer attack. The variation begins with the moves:

- | | | |
|---|-------|-----|
| 7 | ... | a6 |
| 8 | 0-0-0 | ♙d7 |



Black's plan is clear: he endeavours to purposefully develop an

offensive according to the now familiar scheme — ♞c8 and ♙a5 (or ♙a5), ignoring his kingside for the moment. Let us recall what Karpov said: 'the fate of the game in the Sicilian Defence is often decided before the players have deployed half of their pieces. The fact is that the battle forces in this opening are concentrated on opposite flanks and are prepared to be thrust at the enemy king at any minute'.

In truth I myself have been convinced of this characteristic more than once ... Here are some of those memorable games.

Jimenez-Taimanov
Havana 1967

We now take it up from diagram 26, where it is White to move:

- | | |
|---|----|
| 9 | f4 |
|---|----|

The well-known strategical postulate (to answer flank operations with a blow in the centre!) could not be more appropriate than here. Black has left his king in the centre, and is behind in development, so White's most decisive objective lies in the opening of play. White's main trump now is a well prepared break with e4-e5.

- | | | |
|---|-----|-----|
| 9 | ... | ♙e7 |
|---|-----|-----|

Black, alas, cannot manage without this, which departs somewhat from his projected plan. On

the 'routine' 9 ... ♖c8 there may follow 10 ♖f3 and if 10 ... ♗a5, then 11 ♖b1!? (the tempting 11 e5 is answered by the tactical refutation — 11 ... ♖b4! 12 ef ♖xc3 13 ♖d4 ♖a3!) 11 ... b5 12 e5 b4 13 ef bc 14 fg ♖xg7 15 ♗xd6 ♖c7 16 ♖e5 and White has a dangerous attack.

True, 9 ... h6 is possible, leading to interesting complications. This is worth special consideration and this continuation will be examined in a separate example below.

10 ♖f3

The basic course of White's initiative is the e4–e5 break. The alternative 10 f5 is covered in the next game.

10 ... b5

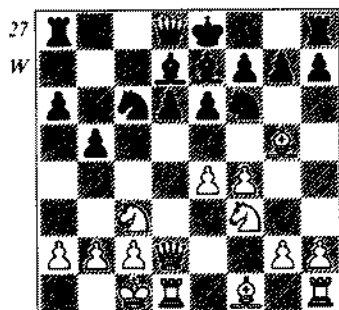
There is no time for turning round now. In the event of 10 ... ♖c8 11 ♖b1 ♗c7 there follows 12 e5! de 13 fe ♖d5 (13 ... ♖xe5?? 14 ♖xe5 ♗xe5 15 ♖xf6) 14 ♖xd5 ed 15 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 16 ♖d3 and matters for Black are unenviable (Spassky–Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1956).

11 e5

The signal for the 'bayonet' charge!

Other methods are clearly less energetic. For example:

(a) 11a3 b4 12 ab ♖xb4 13 ♖b1 (13 e5? ♗a5 14 ♖b1 ♖e4!) 13 ... ♖c6 14 ♖c4 0-0 15 ♖he1 ♗c7 and Black has excellent play



(Vasyukov–Wade, Moscow 1962).

(b) 11 ♖d3 b4 12 ♖e2 0-0 (or 12 ... a5 13 e5 de 14 fe ♖d5 15 ♖xe7 ♖xe7) 13 ♖g3 ♗a5 14 ♖b1 h6 15 ♖h4 ♖ab8 and Black's chances are no worse.

(c) 11 ♖xf6 (one of the advantages of Black delaying castling is the possibility of weakening his kingside pawn structure without any particular risk, on account of the strengthening of his king's pawn cover in the centre. A similar construction is encountered in the game continuation) 12 f5 ♗b6 13 ♖b1 0-0-0 (this is also a characteristic method — Black's king is completely at ease on the queenside). 14 g3 ♖b8 15 ♖h3 (perhaps 15 fe fe 16 ♖h3 is better) 15 ... b4!? 16 ♖e2 e5!? (it is important to deny the white knight the d4 and f4 squares from where it could increase the pressure against the e6 pawn. The evident weakening of the d5 square is not too important here since the white knights are

awkwardly placed) 17 c4 ♖a5 18 b3 ♖c6!? 19 ♗d3 ♖b7!? 20 ♖d2 ♖f8!? 21 ♗f3 ♖h6 22 ♖he1 ♖c5 and Black has an attractive game. This example is highly typical of positions played with similar pawn configurations (Boleslavsky–Taimanov, USSR 1970).

11 ... b4

Just so! The faint-hearted 11 ... de 12 fe ♖d5 simply leads to a prospectless position after 13 ♖xd5 ed 14 ♖xe7 ♖xe7 15 ♖d3.

12 exf6

The gambit venture does not work — 12 ed bc 13 ♗xc3, in view of 13 ... ♖f8 14 f5 ♗a5!? 15 ♖xf6 gf 16 ♗xf6 ♖g8 17 ♖c4 ♖g7 18 fe fe 19 ♗h4 ♖b8 and Black seizes the initiative (Larsen–Panno, Mar del Plata 1956).

12 ... ♖xc3

13 ♗xc3 ♖xf6

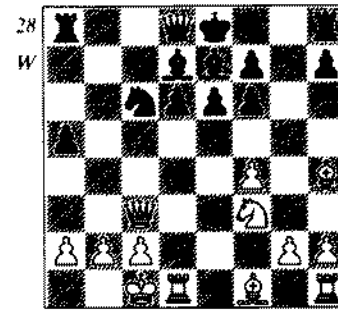
14 ♖h4

Not attracted by the tempting tactical blow 14 ♖xd6 ♖xd6 15 ♖xf6 in view of 15 ... ♖b4!; nothing is promised either by 15 f5 due to 15 ... d5!? 16 fe fe 17 ♖d4 ♗a5!?

14 ... a5

14 ... d5 15 ♖b1 ♖a5 16 f5 ♖c8 17 ♗d2 ♗c7, has also been played, but the text move is perhaps more expedient.

A fascinating picture! The tough tactical skirmish on the two flanks sharpens the situation still further.



Which is the more composed king? Practice has shown that although their pawn covering forces are equally solid, Black already has an open file on which it is perhaps easier to organize activity against the enemy king, but then White has the more harmonious interaction of pieces. In so many words, chances are roughly equal.

15 ♖b1

A useful prophylaxis. The Austrian master Beni, in Vienna 1954, played 15 ♖d4 against me here, which did not turn out too well. After 15 ... ♖b4 16 ♖b1 ♖b8 17 ♗d2 ♗b6 18 c3 ♖d5 it became clear that White's intended 19 ♖f2 falls to the sharp tactical blow 19 ... ♗xb2+ 20 ♗xb2 ♖xc3+ 21 ♖c2 ♖xb2+, but after 19 ♖b3 (19 ... ♖xf4 was threatened) 19 ... a4 20 ♖f2 ♖xc3+! 21 bc ♗b7 22 ♖c4 ab 23 ♖xb3 ♖a4 24 ♗c2 ♖xb3 25 ab ♗xb3+ 26 ♗xb3 ♖xb3 he simply

remained a pawn down in the endgame.

Of course, 15 a3 is also passive for White, since after the natural continuation 15 ... ♖c8 16 ♗e3 ♗c7, Black is the first to go over to the offensive (Pilnik-Spaaniard, Beverwejk 1957), while in the event of 15 ♗d3 ♖b8 16 ♖he1 ♗b4 Black's game is also the more preferable (Zheljandinov-Vistanetskis, USSR 1954).

15 ... ♗b4
16 a3

By using tactical methods White succeeds in ousting the enemy knight, but this still does not give him the chance to seize the initiative.

16 ... ♖c8
17 ♗d2 ♗d5

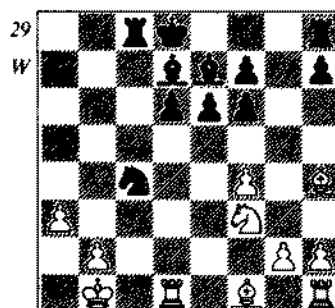
Obviously unsuitable are both 17 ... ♗xc2 in view of 18 ♗d3, and 17 ... ♖xc2 due to 18 ♗e1, since Black incurs material loss in both cases.

18 c4

Jimenez is forcing simplifications not without basis, as far as an attempt to force counterplay in the centre by way of 18 f5 is too late in view of 18 ... ♗b6.

18 ... ♗b6
19 ♗xa5 ♗xc4
20 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8

After a series of lively and double-edged tactical events, play has acquired new characteristics. The



game has transposed into a complicated ending, where approximately equally valued advantages have emerged for either side — White has two connected passed pawns on the queenside, Black has a powerful central pawn mass.

21 ♗f2?!

As often happens with a sharp change in the strategical situations on the board, Jimenez has not been able to adjust and becomes immersed in a new world of ideas and plans. His actual move is superficial and does not answer the demands of the position. The tactical operation 21 ♗xc4 ♖xc4 22 ♖xd6! promised White better prospects. Then in the event of 22 ... ♖xf4 23 ♖d2 the position of the black king becomes extremely uncomfortable, and on 22 ... ♗xd6!? 23 ♗xf6+ ♗e7 24 ♗xh8 f6 25 ♗g7 ♖xf4 26 ♗h6 ♖g4 27 g3 White wins a pawn, although after 27 ... e5 28 ♖d1

♗c7 Black has sufficient counterplay thanks to his two active bishops. Nevertheless this continuation guarantees White a safe endgame.

21 ... ♖g8
22 ♖c1 d5
23 ♗xc4

Eventually White cannot endure the active knight any longer, but with its exchange the classic advantage of the two bishops arises for Black, which in these types of endings has not only a theoretical significance ...

23 ... ♖xc4
24 g3

The initiative would switch to Black after 24 ♖xc4 dc 25 g3 ♗c6 26 ♖d1+ ♗c7 27 ♗d4 ♗d5.

24 ... ♖xc1+
25 ♖xc1 ♗d6
26 ♗d4 ♗e7
27 ♗c5?!

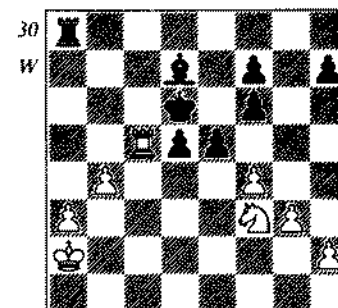
The desire of Jimenez to exchange one of the bishops is quite understandable (and the psychological factor here does not play a small role!), but this undertaking not only costs several tempi, but also leads to an active pawn mass for Black, which is why it cannot be justified. 27 b4 should have been played, of course.

27 ... ♖a8!?

This manoeuvre reduces the dynamism of White's passed pawns and allows Black to gain

time for the activation of his own forces.

28 ♗a2 ♗xc5
29 ♖xc5 ♗d6
30 b4 e5



It becomes clear that Black's compact pawn chain, supported by his bishop, displays more potential than White's blocked passed pawns. The subsequent stage is characteristic of such endings.

31 ♗b2 h5
32 ♗b3 ♗g4
33 ♗e1 d4
34 fe+ fe
35 ♗d3 ♗e6+
36 ♗b2 f6

Black's central pawns are set in motion, whilst White's pawns are paralysed. Black's advantage is indisputable.

37 ♖c1 h4!?

A classical method. For the development of the initiative Black must still activate his rook, which at the moment is fulfilling an

important, though prophylactic, function. Hence it is important to find a method of penetrating the enemy camp — in other words to open up a new avenue to an undefended part of the board.

38 ♖c5 ♗d5
39 ♚f1

It is clear that now, as also on the previous move, it would be disadvantageous for White to capture the h-pawn due to the transfer of the black rook to this file.

39 ... ♗hg
40 ♗hg ♖e7
41 a4

At last the white pawns advance, but ... with obvious tardiness.

41 ... ♚g8!
42 a5

White has neither the time nor the nerves now for a passive defence by way of 42 ♚g1.

42 ... ♚xg3
43 a6 ♚g2+
44 ♖b1 d3!
45 a7

Or 45 ♖xd3 ♗c4 46 ♚d1 ♗xa6.

45 ... ♚a2
46 ♖xd3 ♚xa7
47 ♖c2?

A mistake, which hastens the inevitable defeat.

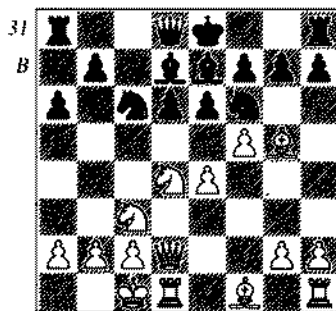
47 ... ♗e4
48 ♚e1 ♗f5

White resigns.

The plan of a flank attack without castling was fully justified in this game. But the king is not always so comfortable in the centre ...

Kholmov-Taimanov
Leningrad 1967

1 e4 c5
2 ♖f3 ♗c6
3 d4 cd
4 ♖xd4 ♖f6
5 ♗c3 d6
6 ♗g5 e6
7 ♗d2 a6
8 0-0-0 ♗d7
9 f4 ♗e7
10 f5?!



Before the last move the position was well-known to the reader from the detailed analysis of the previous game. You will recall that the break e4-e5, which figured as White's main motif of initiative in the plans examined there, was completely strategically based.

However, the interesting 'drama' of the variation cannot be restricted to just one plan, even with such a fundamental idea as e4-e5, and not surprisingly, the searching minds of theoreticians and practical players (Kholmov coming under the second category) take original and various paths in the struggle for the initiative. White's latest sharp move is a convincing example of this. Without any preparation and even at the cost of positional compromise (the e5 square!), White quickly enters into a central confrontation with the aim of opening play and getting at the enemy king. The psychological advantage of such direct tactics is a breach of the plans of his opponent, who is now forced to adjust from aggressive intentions to important measures of defence. And, judging by the subsequent course of the battle, this subjective factor turns out to be extraordinarily effective ...

10 ... ♚c8?!

White's idea is fully vindicated after this superficial reply.

Of course, it is not worth being tempted by the winning of a pawn by way of 10 ... ♖xd4 11 ♗xd4 ef, on which White obtains a dangerous initiative after both 12 ef ♗xf5 13 ♗c4 0-0 14 ♚he1 and 12 ♗d3 fe 13 ♖xe4. However, by taking the central outpost at his

disposal with 10 ... ♗e5, with the idea that, besides other advantages, this prevents his opponent's light-squared bishop from occupying the important a2-g8 diagonal, Black could successfully enter into a discussion on the grounds of White's unusual treatment of the opening. For example, 11 fe fe 12 ♖f3 ♗c7 13 ♗e2 0-0-0 14 ♚hf1 ♚hf8 15 ♖b1 ♖b8 with full equality (Keres-Najdorf, Moscow 1956).

11 fe fe
12 ♗c4

It is now already clear that White has securely seized the initiative. The threat to the e6 pawn forces the exchange of knights, after which Black is deprived of his main trump — the chance to mount his knight on a 'pedestal' at e5, whilst White, on the other hand, strengthens his position in the centre.

12 ... ♖xd4
13 ♗xd4 ♗a5

Although Black's position appears to be sufficiently solid, the vulnerability of his pawn 'island' in the centre makes itself felt. For example, an attempt to transfer the knight to e5 by way of 13 ... ♖g4 does not work in view of 14 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 15 ♗e2!?, and on 13 ... 0-0 the simple 14 ♗b3 is strong, with the threat of 15 e5. The text move, which gains time for the

regrouping of forces, is still comparatively best.

14 ♖xf6 gf
15 ♖b3 ♔d8?!

This extravagant attempt to artificially 'castle' queenside contains an element of panic, and is by no means well-founded since the king is not immediately threatened as yet. By continuing in the spirit of the position with 15 ... ♚g8! and the subsequent transfer of the rook to the centre via g5, Black would still retain sufficient defensive capabilities.

Now, however, the loss of time spent on the king evacuation is fraught with serious troubles.

16 ♔e2 ♚c5

On the tempting 16 ... ♖e5 the simple 17 ♚hf1 would follow, with the threat of 18 ♖f4.

17 ♖d3!?

With this manoeuvre White not only frees the d4 square for the possible leap of his knight, but even more importantly, prepares for the transfer of his queen to the kingside for an attack on the weak pawns.

17 ... ♚e5
18 ♖f4 ♔c7

18 ... ♖b4 19 ♚he1 f5 does not help either in view of 20 a3! and if 20 ... fe, then 21 ab ed 22 ♚xe5 de 23 ♖xd3.

19 ♔b1!?

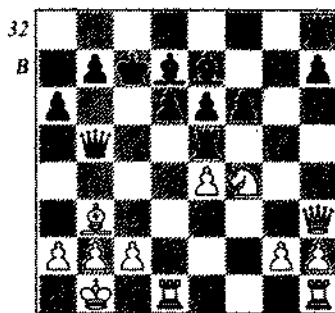
Yet another example of the for-

mula — one should attack with hot heart, but cold reasoning! White's prophylactic move strengthens the threat of the transfer of the queen to the kingside. On the immediate 19 ♖h3 there would follow 19 ... ♚xe4 and 20 ♖g6 is not possible in view of 20 ... ♖g5+.

19 ... ♖b5?!

Inexplicable. Black 'urges' the white queen to where it is rushing. It is, however, true that with the more natural continuation 19 ... ♚e8 20 ♖h3 ♚xe4 21 ♖xe6 ♚xf4 22 ♖xd7 things are lamentable for him.

20 ♖h3!?



The triumph of White's strategy! The siege of the e6 pawn, which he had planned even in the opening, achieves the deserved conclusion. Material losses are unavoidable for Black.

20 ... ♚xe4
21 ♖g6!

This is even stronger than 21 ♖xe6+ which, however, also gives White the advantage.

21 ... ♚hg

The exchange must be given up. With 21 ... ♚e8 22 ♖xh7 ♖d8 23 ♚d3! Black comes under a strong attack.

22 ♖xh8 ♖g5

Although Black has managed to repair the coordination of his forces and, at first glance, has shaken off his immediate worries, he is still left with not a few small problems, and this allows White to realize his material advantage without any special effort.

23 ♚h4! ♖xg2?

Over optimistic. It would be more logical to settle for the more modest 23 ... ♖g4 so as to answer 24 ♖g7 with 24 ... ♔d8 holding the defence for the time being.

Now White's initiative takes on new impetus.

24 ♖g7 ♖d8
25 ♚h5!

A surprisingly decisive role is played by the quite insignificant, up till now, h-pawn — its dynamism is irrepressible.

25 ... ♖f3
26 ♚h6 ♚h4
27 ♚he1 d5
28 c4! d4
29 c5

Finally, all of White's pieces enter the battle. Such an onslaught

on his opponent's disconnected forces cannot be survived.

29 ... ♔c8

29 ... ♖f5+ 30 ♖c2 ♖xc5 does not help either, in view of 31 h7 ♖h5 32 ♖xg6.

30 ♚h7 ♖h5
31 ♚xd4! ♖xh7
32 ♚xd7

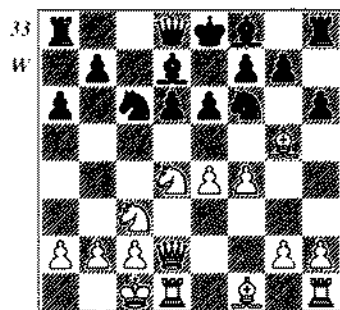
Black resigns.

There was no peace for the uncastled black king in this game. Here, so as not to conclude this theme on such a pessimistic note (that would not be quite fair!), one more example, but with a different method of implementation.

Barden-Taimanov
USSR v England, London 1954

1 e4 c5
2 ♖f3 ♔c6
3 d4 cd
4 ♖xd4 ♖f6
5 ♔c3 d6
6 ♖g5 e6
7 ♖d2 a6
8 0-0-0 ♖d7
9 f4 ♚h6

This move gives the game a particular flavour. In general, as one may have been convinced by some of the previous examples, such a weakness of the pawn chain on the kingside must be treated extremely carefully (it is well-known that one should not make



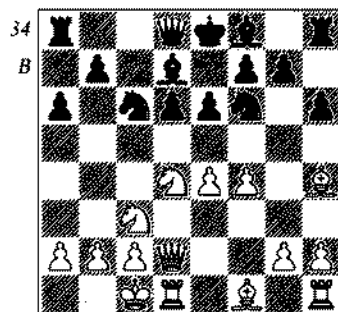
an unforced pawn move in that part of the board where one's opponent is planning an attack!), but in the present case the advance of the h-pawn has a tactical basis. By driving the opponent's bishop away to an undefended square, Black obtains the possibility, through a combination of blows to direct the game into the channels of fascinating complications, where many tempting prospects are revealed for both sides.

This idea is often tried a move earlier, but then White retains a wider choice of bishop retreats — either to h4, to f4 or to e3.

10 gh4

Of course, the exchange of the bishop would be a concession, since after 10 gxf6 wxf6 White cannot advantageously utilize the motif of the central break for the opening of the d-file. For example: 11 e5 de 12 ddb5 wd8 13 dd6+ dx6 14 wxd6 ef 15 de4 we7 16 wd2 dc8!? and White's

initiative is not worth the material expense (Shamkovich-Egorov, USSR 1961); or 11 df3 wd8!? 12 db1 de7 13 h4 wb6 14 dh3 0-0-0 with completely level play for Black (Marjanovic-Kupreichik, Yugoslavia v USSR 1979).



10 ... dx4!?

This is the sharp tactical idea which determines the character of the struggle in Black's chosen variation. The consequences of this enterprising operation are in no way simple, and complicated problems now arise for both players to the same degree. 10 ... g5 11 fg dg4!? is an interesting and double-edged alternative.

11 we1

Only thus can one cross Black's plan. Of course, on 11 dx4 wxh4 12 dxc6 dxc6 13 dxd6+ dx6 14 wxd6 dd8 15 wxd8+ wxd8 16 dx8+ dx8 the ending, in any event, does not turn out in White's favour.

Now double-edged play arises where White has a significant initiative for the temporarily sacrificed pawn.

11 ... df6

Of course, not 11 ... g5? in view of 12 dx4 gh 13 wc3.

12 df5!?

The game has opened up and the delay of the black king in the centre makes itself felt. Black must take urgent measures for its evacuation.

12 ... wa5

A rather sober solution to the current problem. By returning the pawn Black gains time for securing the safety of his king. Other continuations which have occurred in practice are dangerous for Black. For example:

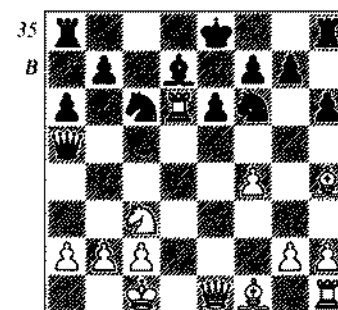
(a) 12 ... wb8 13 dxf6 gf 14 de4 d5 (14 ... ef? 15 dxd6+ cd8 16 dx(f7+) 15 dxf6+ cd8 16 wd2 and White's advantage summons no doubt.

(b) 12 ... wc7 13 dxf6 gf 14 dd5 wd8 15 we3! b5 16 de2 h5 17 df3 db8 18 dhd1 and White's onslaught acquires a crushing aspect (Bradavarevic-Velimirovic, Yugoslavia 1965).

13 dxd6+ dx6

14 dx6

The situation on the board has cleared somewhat. Having returned the pawn, Black has repelled the direct threats and has



generally concluded the mobilization of his forces, preparing a haven for his king on the queenside. But, at the same time, defects have been created in his position — in particular a weakness is felt on the dark squares, besides which, his kingside pawn chain is under threat of destruction. These factors demand purposeful operations for the organization of concrete counterplay.

14 ... wc7

The aim of this manoeuvre is to partially 'plug' the dark-squared defects. The logical alternative — 14 ... 0-0-0 — is of approximately equal value and has a good practical basis.

So as to acquaint ourselves with the basic motives which determine either side's plans in this case, let's sample a few characteristic examples of this plan.

(a) 15 dxf6 gf 16 wh4 db4 17 a3 dxc2!? 18 dx7 (18 dxc2?

♠a4+) 18 ... ♖xd7 19 ♜xc2 ♖hd8 with unclear, double-edged play.

(b) 15 ♙e2 ♚e7 16 ♙xf6 gf 17 ♜f2 ♙c6 18 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 with roughly level chances (Klovan-Vasyukov, USSR 1973).

(c) 15 ♜d2 ♚e7 16 ♙d3 ♙c6 17 ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 and Black has no difficulties (Gligoric-Averbakh, Zurich 1953).

(d) 15 ♖d2 g5! (15 ... ♚e7?! 16 ♜e5! ♜xe5 17 fe ♚f5 18 ef ♚xh4 19 ♚e4!?) 16 fg hg 17 ♙f2 (or 17 ♙g3 ♚d5!?) 17 ... ♚g4 18 ♙g1 ♚ge5 and Black has fully equal play (Milic-Durasevic, Yugoslavia 1954).

(e) 15 ♖d1! ♜c7 (15 ... ♚e7?? 16 ♚d5!; 15 ... g5 16 fg hg 17 ♙g3!?) 16 ♜f2 ♚e7 17 ♙d3 ♙c6 18 f5 e5 19 ♖he1 and White's position is preferable (Spassky-Rabar, Göteborg 1955).

As is easily noticed, the main method of play for Black is the regrouping of forces according to the scheme of ♚e7 and ♙c6. White's hopes for the initiative lie in central operations and, when the opportunity presents itself, an attack on the weakness of Black's kingside pawns by way of exchanging on f6.

It is probably these very motives that determine the character of the struggle along with the queen manoeuvre which Black made in

the text game.

15 ♜d2

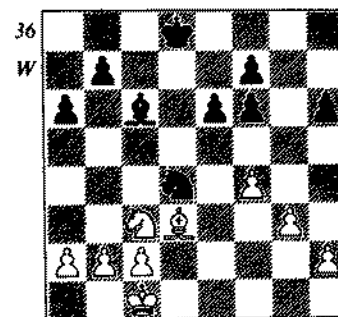
Later analysis established that 15 ♖d2! is a better continuation for White so as to, after 15 ... 0-0-0 (15 ... ♜xf4 is dangerous for Black in view of 16 ♙xf6 ♜xf6 17 ♚e4 ♜e5 18 ♚d6+ ♜e7 19 ♜f2 as was played in the game Berger-Benko, Budapest 1955) 16 ♙xf6 gf 17 ♜h4 f5 18 ♙e2 ♙e8 19 ♖hd1, organize perceptible pressure (Ivkov-Smailbegovic, Yugoslavia 1957). However, in 1954, when the match USSR-England was played, the subtle retreat of the rook had not yet come to theoreticians' attention.

15 ... 0-0-0

The immediate 15 ... ♚e7 is more accurate, as I played some time later against Averbakh. That game continued 16 ♙xf6 gf 17 ♚e4 0-0-0 18 ♚xf6 ♙c6 19 ♖d3 ♚g6 20 ♚h5 ♙e4 (20 ... ♜b8!?) 21 ♖c3 ♖xd2 22 ♖xc7+ ♜xc7 23 ♜xd2 ♚h4 24 ♖g1 ♖d8+ and Black's initiative fully compensates for the insignificant material deficit.

Now, by means of 16 ♙f2!?, White can hinder the intended transfer of the black knight to the kingside via e7, on which the harmonious deployment of his forces will be significantly impeded.

16	♙e2	♚e7!?
17	♖d1	♚f5
18	♙xf6	gf
19	♖d3	♙c6
20	g3	♖xd3
21	♜xd3	♖d8
22	♜xd8+	♜xd8
23	♖xd8+	♜xd8
24	♙d3	♚d4



As a result of forcing play the position is simplified and a simple ending has arisen where, strictly speaking, an agreement of a draw would be quite appropriate. However, as you can see, both players are aware that chances are not yet fully exhausted and due to 'youth' and mutual optimism the battle continues. Although the subsequent phase goes beyond the bounds of the main theme of the analysis, and there are no more particularly brilliant events in the game, the endgame nevertheless is worth looking at, as far as it contains some instructive episodes

which are characteristic of Sicilian endings.

25	h4	e5
26	fe	fe
27	♚d2	♜e7
28	♜e3	♜e6
29	♚d1	f5

Since the early moves the problem of the Sicilian is which of the pawns are the more dynamic — the outside or central ones? Of course, this is an abstract question, for much depends on the correlation and disposition of the remaining forces. But nevertheless, experience shows that central passed pawns, perhaps, demonstrate more potential than outside passed pawns. However, this observation is immaterial in the current situation — as before, chances are equal.

30	c3	♚f3
31	♚f2	♙d5
32	c4	♙c6
33	b4	♚d4
34	♚d1	♜f6
35	♚c3	♚e6
36	b5	

Up till now the manoeuvres of both players have been sufficiently harmless and nothing significant has occurred on the board. But White's last move bears a sharper character; he activates his pawns significantly, but ... at the cost of some positional concessions, which are highly important in

endings as elsewhere. The fact is, that the blockading c5 square turns out to be at the disposal of Black's knight.

36 ... ♖h1
37 a4?

And this is now a fundamental mistake — the a4 pawn becomes a convenient target. 37 ba was better, developing drawing tendencies.

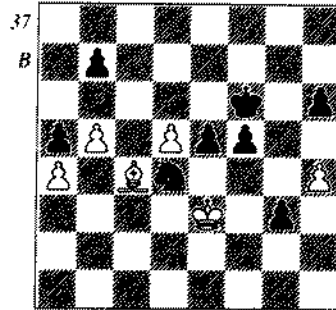
37 ... a5!
38 ♖d5+?

Of course, White's position is now full of misgivings, but there were not yet grounds for panic. By adopting waiting tactics (say 38 ♖c2), White would still retain a defensible position. Now, however, matters deteriorate irreparably, since in a position of such a blocked nature his bishop becomes immeasurably more passive than the 'leaping' black knight.

38 ... ♗xd5
39 cd ♗d4!?

This is even more precise than 39 ... ♖c5. Defending the f5 pawn, Black frees his knight for an excursion on the queenside.

40 ♖c4



40 ... ♗e7
41 ♖f1 ♗d6
42 ♖g2 b6
43 ♗d3 ♗b3!?
44 ♖h3 ♗c5+
45 ♗d2 ♗e4+

White resigns.

Of course, the above games and opening variations far from exhaust the richness of content of the double-edged Rauzer attack. However, the author hopes to have helped in the understanding of the basic strategical motives and the inherent dynamism, so that the inquisitive reader has a basis on which to research his own ways and interpretations in the many varied possibilities of this fascinating opening system.

3 The Boleslavsky System

Dynamics versus Statics

Among the various possibilities which can be found in the asymmetrical Sicilian formations, a particular place is occupied by the problems associated with the contrasting range of static and dynamic factors which determine the strategic character of the struggle. In a string of systems Black is even prepared to accept fundamental positional concessions for the sake of active piece play, since such an imbalance opens up a wide sphere for bold experimentation, sharp conflict of ideas and creative fantasy.

To such interesting modern schemes, evoked by the ideas of La Bourdonnais and Emanuel Lasker, one can now attribute the established and profoundly controversial 'Pelikan' variation, certain ramifications of the 'O'Kelly' variation (2 ... a6), and, of course, the Boleslavsky, which serves as a fundamental strategical base for

an understanding of some of the opinions and evaluations which have been made in the manuals over the years.

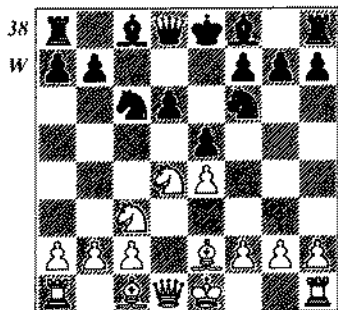
To tell the truth, I initially had first-hand experience of this variation when, in a series of games playing as White, I had to solve new unusual strategical problems for the first time.

I can recall the strong impression of the first lesson which was taught to me by the originator himself in the 1949 USSR Championships.

Taimanov-Boleslavsky
USSR Ch. 1949

1 e4 e5
2 ♖f3 ♗c6
3 d4 cd
4 ♗xd4 ♗f6
5 ♗c3 d6
6 ♖e2 e5!?

This energetic blow in the centre characterizes the plan of dynamic play developed by I. Boleslavsky.



Its motives are polemical, in as far as they contradict the classical laws of strategy. It is evident that a backward pawn has now been created in the black camp (yes, on an open file as well!) and the central d5 square becomes a convenient outpost for White's pieces (according to a remark attributed to Lasker, a 'hole' in the pawn 'wall'). But against this Black gains time and space for the activation of his forces which, to the mind of the originator, to some extent compensate for the positional concessions. In short, play becomes of a dynamic and concrete nature, where each of the players have their trumps. Of course, Boleslavsky's plan is not new (La Bourdonnais had previously employed a similar motif on the 4th move and Lasker on the 5th), but it was he who shaped the controversial idea into a harmonious strategical system.

7 ♖b3

Out of the five possible basic attempts to reveal the shady side of Black's formation, theory recognizes either this retreat or the manoeuvre 7 ♖f3 as the best alternatives. The other practical paths are less advisable. For example:

(a) 7 ♖f5 ♕xf5 8 e4 d5 9 ♕g5 ♕b4!? and Black seizes the initiative.

(b) 7 ♖db5 a6 8 ♖a3 ♕e6 9 ♖c4 b5 10 ♖e3 ♖d4 and Black has excellent play.

(c) 7 ♖xc6 bc 8 0-0 (or 8 ♖d3 ♕e7 9 ♖g3 0-0 10 0-0 ♖b8 11 b3 ♖d7 12 ♖d1 ♖c5 13 f4 ♖b6 14 ♖h1 ♖h8, Pytlakovsky-Taimanov, Szawno Zdroj 1950) 8 ... ♕e7 9 ♖d3 0-0 10 f4 ♖d7 11 f5 ♕b7 12 ♖g3 d5 13 ♕h6 ♕f6 14 ♖ad1 ♖h8 15 ♕c1 d4 16 ♖b1 c5 and Black has the initiative, Fuller-Taimanov, Hastings 1955-56.

7 ... ♕e7
8 ♕g5

Now, from a position of experience and knowledge, one can only be touched by such a naive plan to 'refute' Boleslavsky's opening conception with a direct attempt to seize the d5 outpost (moreover, since there is also the tactical retort 8 ... ♖e4!?) but then, almost 40 years ago, classical principles seemed unshakeable. Of course, it would be better to continue 8 0-0 9 ♕e3, harmoniously con-

cluding one's development, although in this case also, as Boleslavsky repeatedly demonstrated, Black, by way of 9 ... a5 (with the idea of a flank advance), or 9 ... ♕e6 (with a subsequent 10 ... d5) obtains fully equal counter-chances.

8 ... 0-0
9 ♕xf6

In any event consistent. With 9 ♖d2 one would have to contend with the routine flank action 9 ... a5!?. For example: 10 a3 (or 10 a4 ♕e6) 10 ... a4 11 ♖c1 ♕e6 12 0-0 ♖d4 13 ♖d1 ♖c8 and Black takes the initiative (Kasparian-Geller, USSR 1952).

9 ... ♕xf6
10 0-0

Or 10 ♖d5 ♕g5!? 11 ♕c4 ♕e6 12 h4 ♕h6 13 g4?! ♕f4 14 ♖e2 ♖c8 15 c3 ♖e7!? and the advantage is with Black (Raikher-Boleslavsky, Budapest 1953).

10 ... ♕e6
11 ♖d5 ♕g5!?

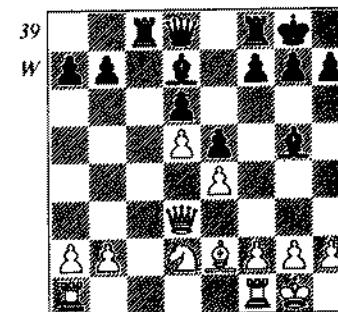
A very strong manoeuvre which is one of the chief arguments in defence of Boleslavsky's opening plan. As Alexei Suetin wrote in his biography of the Grandmaster: 'Boleslavsky's idea rests mainly on ignoring the occupation of the d5 square but retaining the two bishops which subsequently, according to his plan, will acquire much potential force.' Besides, the

role of the dark-squared bishop becomes especially significant, since it keeps the important dark squares on the c1-h6 diagonal under fire.

12 ♖d3 ♖e7!?
13 c4!?

It all lies in that same naive conviction that global control over the d5 outpost will guarantee the advantage. The immediate 13 ♖d2 was best.

13 ... ♖c8
14 ♖d2 ♖xd5
15 cd ♕d7



As a result of a superficial and somewhat dogmatic treatment of this difficult opening variation, White has emerged with a clearly worse position. His fight for an advantage in space does not serve as sufficient compensation for his opponent's queenside initiative, where black's rook on the open file, along with his two long-range bishops, controls the situation.

However, it is true that White's position is still sufficiently solid at present.

16 ♖c4 ♗c7
17 a4 b5
18 ab ♙xb5
19 b3 a5

Black's advantage has become tangible. 20... a4 is now threatened.

20 ♖a2!?

Perhaps this is the only way of holding the position — the rook transfers to the vulnerable c-file.

20 ... a4
21 ♖c2 ♗c5
22 ♖b1

White 'clutches' at 'his' light squares and restrains the onslaught with great resolve. 22 ba ♙xa4 23 ♖c3 would be bad, if only because of 23... ♖c7 and the pin becomes fatal.

22 ... ♗b4
23 ♖cb2!?

Again the only move, the threat of 24 ba! forces Black to break the burdensome (for White) tension.

23 ... a3
24 ♖a2

Although, as before, matters for White are unenviable, the immediate danger has been repelled. In any case, his pieces have found stability.

24 ... ♖c7
25 g3 ♖a8
26 ♕g2 h6

27 h4 ♙d8
28 ♙f1 ♖b7
29 ♗f3 ♙xc4

This is testimony of a disappointment at the course of events. Boleslavsky, to all appearances, has resigned himself to the loss of the initiative.

30 ♙xc4 ♗c5

And the players agreed a draw. All the same, strictly speaking White's position is still worse. Despite the fairly satisfactory final outcome of the struggle in this contest, it is recalled with rather a bitter after-taste and provided a lot of thinking points. Above all, it served as a warning to the dogmatism of one's own decisions. Having been confronted with new strategical problems, I did not succeed in finding an adequate riposte and my treatment of the position was determined not by concrete form, but rather by formal canonistic evaluations. On the other hand, Boleslavsky's play almost throughout the whole game was distinguished by its freshness, displaying an originality of ideas and dynamism of plans.

Concrete conclusions were also drawn regarding the opening concept. It was evident that, firstly, it is not possible to 'refute' Boleslavsky's new system, since its positional drawbacks are compen-

sated for by dynamic advantages. And, secondly, one should not overrate the importance of the d5 outpost and concentrate one's attention on its seizure. This motif should only accompany the general plan of a harmonious activation of forces in the centre, where the break f2-f4 may become a major resource.

There are several arguments in support of Boleslavsky's idea, which are also boldly manifested in this game. There is also the freedom of development, the possession of the semi-open c-file, control over the central dark-square complex and, finally, on account of the white knight's position on b3, the possibility of a promising surging march of the outside a-pawn.

As is well-known, one's own negative experiences are also useful and, having tested this variation as White on several other occasions besides this without particular success, I took it into my own armoury, but now... as Black. So the Boleslavsky system for some time (while White allowed it!) occupied a solid part in my opening repertoire. And, it must be said, brought me much creative joy.

I will impart to the reader a most memorable achievement.

Unzicker-Taimanov Stockholm 1952

1 e4 c5
2 ♖f3 ♖c6
3 d4 cd
4 ♖xd4 ♖f6
5 ♖c3 d6
6 ♙e2 e5

As you can see — now Taimanov plays the Boleslavsky Variation not as White, but as Black!

7 ♖f3

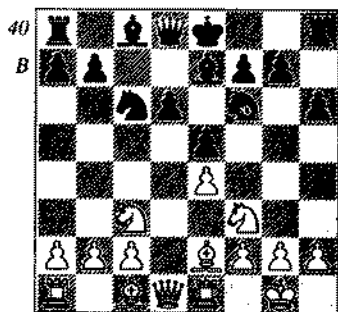
This retreat, rather than the now familiar 7 ♖b3, had its own adherents in those days. Practice has shown that the positioning of the knight on b3 allows Black to develop an initiative on the queenside (for example, after 7 ♖b3 ♙e7 8 0-0 0-0 9 f4 a5! 10 a4 ♖b4!, Grünfeld-Boleslavsky, Warsaw 1947) and naturally the idea arose to withdraw the knight to a less vulnerable standing. On the other hand, with this White is deprived of the active resource f2-f4.

7 ... h6

This prophylactic is a necessity here. In the event of 7... ♙e7 8 ♙g5 0-0 9 ♙xf6 ♙xf6 10 ♖d5 Black's bishop does not have the convenient sidestep to g5 (incidentally, in this lies one of the arguments in favour of the move 7 ♖f3) and it is not now possible to create counterplay as compen-

sation for the loss of the central outpost.

8 0-0 ♗e7
9 ♖e1



An instructive idea. White intends to redeploy his forces, on which Black's intended advance of d6-d5 will be hindered due to the 'x-ray' on the e5 pawn. The alternative 9 ♗e3 0-0 10 ♜d2 ♗e6 11 ♖ad1 is quite harmless and may be parried by both 11 ... ♜d7 12 ♜e1 ♖fd8 and by means of 11 ... ♖e8!? 12 h3 ♖c8 13 ♗h2 ♗a5 (Levenfish-Boleslavsky, USSR 1943).

9 ... 0-0
10 h3

It is probably not in the spirit of the cautious Unzicker to allow the pin, which is possible after 10 ♗f1 ♗g4, but this timid method of play does not promise much either.

10 ... a6

The idea of a queenside pawn offensive is frequently encountered

in this variation. The banal 10 ... ♗e6 is less convincing in view of 11 ♗f1 ♖c8 12 ♗d5!? ♗xd5 13 ed ♗b4 14 c4 and White, as was shown in the game Aronson-Rovner, Moscow 1950, obtains a positional advantage.

11 ♗f1

In the event of the inviting 11 a4 Black can now continue 11 ... ♗e6 with advantage, as here on 12 ♗f1 ♖c8 13 ♗d5 ♗xd5 14 ed ♗b4 15 c4 he has the significant reply 15 ... a5!, blocking his opponent's queenside pawns (Weis-Taimanov, Leningrad 1950).

11 ... b5
12 a3?!

Too many prophylactics! 12 a4 b4 13 ♗d5 would be better as, incidentally, I myself once played against Ilivitsky (USSR 1949), and which was also played against me by Tolush (Leningrad 1950).

12 ... ♗b7
13 b3 ♖c8
14 ♗b2 ♖c7!

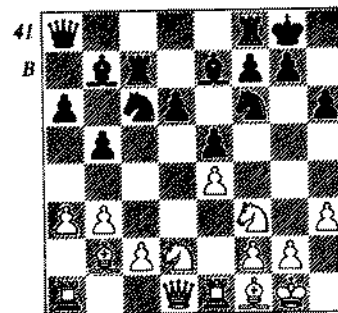
One could be proud of dreaming up such a plan of transferring the queen to a8 with the subsequent doubling of the rooks on the c-file, combining pressure against the two potential pawn weaknesses in White's camp, if a similar idea, albeit in a quite different position and as White, had not already been implemented a quarter of a century earlier by Richard

Reti in a game against Edward Lasker in a tournament in New York. But the unintentional plagiarism deserves recognition.

15 ♗b1

An interesting idea. Unzicker calculates that after 15 ... ♜a8 16 ♗d2 ♖fc8 17 c4! he will undermine Black's construction and will hold the initiative himself. However, he is in for a disappointment. The banal 15 ♗d5 ♗xd5 16 ed ♗b8 17 ♖c1 would be better, although Black has good play in this case also after 17 ... ♗d7.

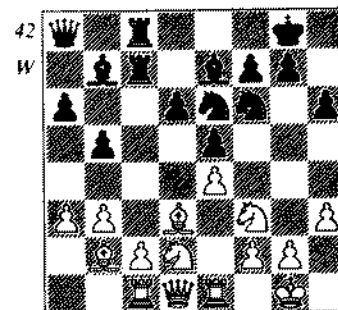
15 ... ♜a8
16 ♗d2



16 ... ♗d8!

This strong manoeuvre was not foreseen by Unzicker. The e4 pawn is now under fire, and the coordination of White's pieces is hindered. These unexpected circumstances inevitably condemn White to a passive and prospectless defence.

17 ♗d3 ♗e6
18 ♖ac1
18 c4 does not work, of course, due to 18 ... ♗c5.
18 ... ♖fc8



Black's advantage is indisputable. White's pieces are awkwardly constrained and they cannot be regrouped to repel the threats, which grow with every move.

19 ♗h2 ♗d7!?
20 ♗hf1 ♗c5
21 ♗g3

Tragicomic, but apart from this knight, White has generally nothing beneficial to move.

21 ... g6
22 ♗e2

A fascinating moment. In preventing the thrust 22 ... ♗f4, White incidentally sets a positional trap. If Black is seduced by the e4 pawn, then after 22 ... ♗xe4 23 ♗xc4 ♗xe4 24 ♗xe4 ♜xe4 25 ♗c3 and 26 ♗d5 he is instantly

deprived of all his advantage. But Black has stronger means.

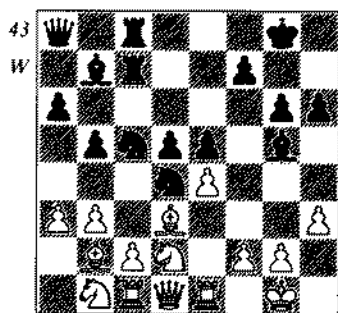
- 22 ... ♗g5!
23 ♖c3

The white knight displays miraculous energy, single-handedly repelling the direct threats on both flanks, but it is impossible to maintain such a load for long.

- 23 ... ♖d4!?

In similar overwhelming positions, there is always the hidden danger of 'selling out too cheaply'. In this case also an attempt to acquire a material advantage after the tempting 23 ... ♖d3 24 cd ♖c5 could result in needless complications after 25 ♖e2 ♗xd2 26 ♖xd2 ♗xb3 27 ♖xh6 ♖xc1 28 ♗xc1!, when the threat of 29 ♗g5 is very unpleasant for Black.

- 24 ♖cb1 d5!



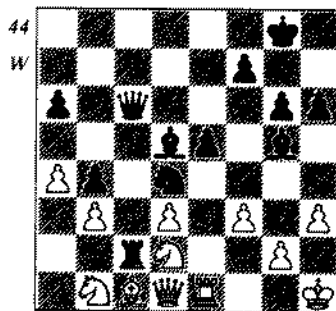
The crowning of Black's strategy! Opening up play, he animates all of his forces and forces victory in a few moves.

- 25 ed
25 ♗xd4 is no use in view of 25 ... ♖xd3.

- 25 ... ♖xd3
26 cd ♗xc1
27 ♗xc1 ♗xd5
28 f3 ♗c2!
29 a4

White is running out of moves. 29 ♗xe5 loses in view of 29 ... ♖c6 30 ♗e1 ♗xc1 31 ♖xc1 ♖e2+.

- 29 ... b4
30 ♖h1 ♖c6



An unusual position. With a full board of pieces White can literally move nothing. After the unstoppable 31 ... ♗f4 and 32 ... ♖f5 large material losses are inevitable. Therefore Unzicker **resigned**. Virtually all the elements of dynamic strategy were used in the Boleslavsky in this game, although their general expression was not found without the help of his opponent. Of course, this seldom happens, but independent motifs can also play a major role in themselves.

An honourable victory over the former World Champion, Anatoly Karpov, is most memorable for me. In this game I succeeded in executing a typical active strategy, based on the possession of the dark-squared complex in the centre of the board. And although the fundamental position is not formally derived from the Boleslavsky system but from the O'Kelly variation, it is clear that the fixed ideas were derived namely from there.

Karpov-Taimanov
Leningrad 1977

- 1 e4 c5
2 ♖f3 ♖c6
3 d4 cd
4 ♖xd4 a6
5 c4 e5

Thus, 'a variation on the theme of Boleslavsky'. In this particular scheme of ideas the fight for the dark squares in the centre is expressed in a particularly categorical spirit, for the d5 square is given over to White 'forever'.

- 6 ♖b3

An insidious reaction typical of Karpov's style. Setting his hopes on the stability of the positional advantages achieved, he does not rush to emphasize them, but most of all tries to restrict his opponent's counterplay.

On the other form of retreat — 6 ♖c2 there would follow the principled 6 ... ♗c5 7 ♗d3 d6 8 0-0 ♖ge7 9 ♖c3 0-0 10 ♖h5 ♖g6 and play takes on the direction which Black intended, whereby each side possesses their 'own' complex of squares — White with the light squares and Black with the dark ones.

Theory also examines another, sharper development of events — 6 ♖f5 d5! (on 6 ... d6 7 ♖c3 g6 8 ♖e3 ♗g7 the riposte 9 ♖ed5 is unpleasant for Black) 7 cd ♗xf5 8 ef ♖d4 9 ♖c3 (or 9 ♗d3 ♖xd5 10 0-0 0-0!) 9 ... ♖ge7 10 ♗d3, but then the picture of the battle changes sharply and although White takes a lead in development he is deprived of such a major opening conquest as control over the key outpost on d5.

- 6 ... ♖f6
7 ♖c3 ♗b4

The chief motive of Black's strategy is dynamic piece play in support of the fight for the central dark-square complex.

- 8 f3

The dynamic potential of Black's chosen opening scheme dictates attentiveness and care from White. For example, on the natural developing move 8 ♗d3 there could follow the energetic 8 ... b5.

8 ... 0-0
 9 ♖e3 d6
 10 ♜c1 b6!?

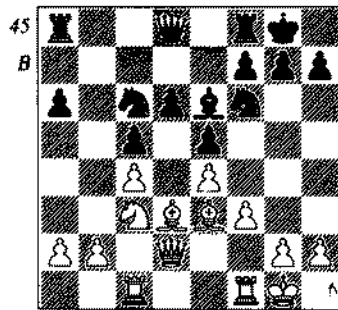
Played opportunely and consistently!

At this moment, when White is ready to reap the fruits of his restraining strategy by gaining a clear positional advantage with 11 a3, Black, in continuation of his opening idea, 'consolidates' his dark squares, which guarantee the basis for his counterplay.

11 ♖d3 ♗c5!?
 12 ♜d2 ♗e6
 13 ♝xc5

White cannot manage without this exchange, sooner or later.

13 ... bc
 14 0-0



It is time to sum up this unorthodox opening debate. Perhaps it is favourable for both sides: White has concluded his development harmoniously, retained solid control over the central outpost

d5, his pawn chain is flexible and he has no flaws, in short, he has created a premise for the fight for the initiative in the forthcoming middlegame.

But Black has also achieved certain successes. He has also mobilized his forces without difficulty, and in conjunction with his general plan has acquired the complex of dark squares and the important outpost on d4 in the centre of the board. He is also blessed with the open b-file for possible queenside operations.

Chances must be considered to be roughly equal.

14 ... ♗d4!?

Rashness, depriving Black, to a significant degree, of the fruits of his consistent opening strategy. 14 ... ♜b8 would have been more in the spirit of the position.

15 ♗d5!

This is the whole point! Nothing is gained by the tempting 15 ♗g5 in view of 15 ... h6 16 ♗h4 g5 17 ♗f2 ♝h5, and in such fashion, Black succeeds in seizing the initiative. The essence of the position is that, in the event of 15 ... ♝xd5 16 cd ♗d7, White has the energetic resource 17 b4!

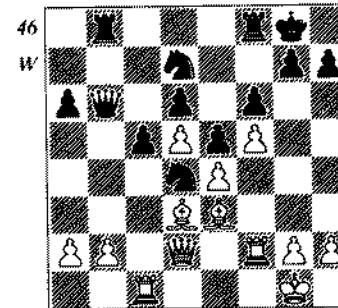
15 ... ♗d7

The retreat is forced (16 ♗g5 was threatened) and this is the penalty of impetuosity.

16 f4!

Karpov, as always, splendidly senses the final for the initiative. As far as the continuation 16 ... ef is inadmissible for Black in view of 17 ♗xd4 cd 18 ♜xf4 ♝c5 19 ♜fd1, White captures space with advantage.

16 ... ♜b8
 17 f5 ♗xd5
 18 cd ♜b6
 19 ♜f2 f6



In contrast with the previous diagram, the situation on the board has changed significantly in White's favour. He is restricting his opponent on the kingside, his pieces have space, and he has a real chance, by way of 20 ♝h1 with a subsequent 21 g4, to undertake active operations against the enemy king. Despite the strong position of his knight on d4 and the possession of the b-file it would be very difficult for Black to create any sort of counterthreat.

Fortunately, Karpov strays to a less promising plan ...

20 ♜c4!?

Karpov becomes distracted by Black's isolated pawn. Its encirclement indeed looks very tempting, but here the intuition of the World Champion prompts a mistaken route. In any event it is not the most threatening.

20 ... a5
 21 ♜a4 ♜a8
 22 ♜e1

Karpov's intended plan of siege becomes evident. White wishes to play 23 b3 and subsequently 24 ♗d2. However, all this is somewhat slow and gives his opponent time for the organization of his counterplay.

22 ... ♜a7!?

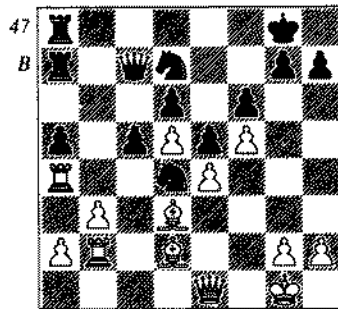
The magic of authority, as is often the case, causes paralysis and compels one to have faith in even debatable plans. One can only thus explain the passivity of Black's defensive reaction. In contrast, the artificial regrouping of White's forces could have been refuted by the cutting and bold retort — 22 ... ♜fb8! 23 b3 ♜c7 24 ♗d2 ♜b4! — on the basis of which is a refutation of the entire plan of the siege of the a-pawn, as undertaken by Karpov.

23 b3 ♜fa8

24 ♜b2

The immediate 24 ♗d2 does not suit in view of 24 ... ♝xb3 25 ab ♜xb3 with a double threat.

24 ... ♖c7
25 ♔d2



25 ... ♕b6!

Further passivity would be fatal — Black cannot stand by and allow the opening of a second front by way of 26 g4 (or 26 ♔c3, with the further 27 g4) whereby his pieces would turn out to be inactively squeezed into a corner of the board. This explains his decision to sacrifice a pawn in order to activate his pieces; it is now the only advisable reaction.

The struggle now takes on a tactical nature.

26 ♖xa5

Of course, not 26 ♔xa5?? in view of 26 ... ♕xa4 27 ♔xc7 ♕xb2.

26 ... c4!

27 ♔f1

It is not difficult to believe that White risks material losses with other replies. For example:

(a) 27 ♖xa7 ♗xa7 and the 'x-

ray' of the queen on a7 to the king on g1 becomes irresistible.

(b) 27 bc ♖xa5 28 ♔xa5 ♗c5!
29 ♔xb6 ♕f3+! 30 ♖h1 ♕xe1
31 ♔xc5 ♕xd3 and Black wins.

27 ... ♖xa5

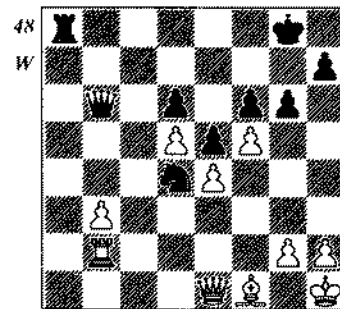
28 ♔xa5 ♗c5

29 ♔xb6 ♗xb6

30 ♖h1 cb

The tempting 30 ... ♖c8 31 ♗c3 ♕b5 does not work in view of 32 bc!

31 ab g6!



A new 'change of scenery'. At the cost of a pawn Black has vitalized play, which is in complete accordance with the spirit of the variation. All of his pieces suddenly gain in activity, and the exchange of his opponent's dark-squared bishop guarantees him a long-awaited and fundamental supremacy on the dark squares. White must now turn his thoughts to defence.

32 fg hg
33 b4 ♖g7
34 b5

Note, incidentally, that the continuation recommended by some commentators at the time 34 ♔d3 ♖a3 35 ♗f1 is hardly convincing in view of 35 ... ♕b3!, though Black's initiative does not fade in the current situation either.

34 ... f5!

35 ef

Karpov's inherent 'sense of danger' betrays him here. 35 ♔d3 should be played without fail, putting a brake on the hostile attack.

35 ... ♕xf5

36 ♖b3?

This is now a serious mistake. Repelling the threat of 36 ... ♕e3, Karpov does not notice that there is a more significant danger. 36 ♖b1 was more solid.

36 ... ♗d4

37 b6?

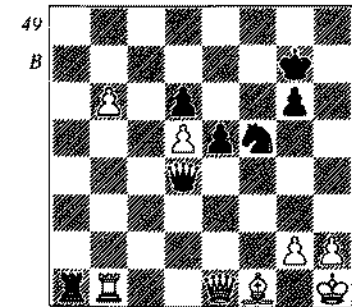
Only 37 ♖b1 repels the direct threats, but here also matters for White are unenviable.

37 ... ♖a1

38 ♖b1(49)

Now it is too late.

38 ... ♕g3+!!



One of the most memorable moments of my entire chess career! I must confess that this spectacular finale to the contest against the then almost invincible Champion of the World has hitherto been the highest object of my creative pride. On 39 hg there would follow 39 ... ♖a8! with unavoidable mate. The rook displays splendid energy, raking through all four corners of the board — speeding from a1— a8, and then to h8, so as to overtake the king on h1!

Karpov resigned.

Boleslavsky's idea acquired an original realization in this game, although the main motif — the dynamism of forces at the cost of certain positional concessions — remained the same.

4 The Paulsen System

The Diversity of Paulsen's Idea in Force

Of the many fundamental schemes of the variety of Sicilian formations there is perhaps no other that has survived the test of time so successfully as the Paulsen system, either on a general level or in my personal experience ...

Having been conceived at the end of the XIX century in games of the eminent maestros — the brothers Louis and Wilfred Paulsen, it initially assumed a purely defensive function. Through the efforts of several generations of analysts the system went through a complex path of enrichment of ideas, re-interpretations of content, and vitalization of variations, and in our day has gained a wide recognition for its exceptional capacity for double-edged, complex and varied positions. The diversity of the strategic motifs which lie in the Paulsen variation is a characteris-

tic of many modern openings. The large variety of introductory moves has allowed a wide scope for inquisitive creative fantasy and made this system attractive for chessplayers of the most diverse styles.

I must confess that personally I am most attracted to this opening scheme by the nature of its dynamism and concreteness of double-edged conflicts, which emerge even at the earliest stages of the struggle. In many cases the 'sphere of influence' for either side is sharply demarcated directly after the introductory moves and, moreover, even the move-order itself often determines the essence and character of the contest.

Of course, to change my repertoire and switch from the Rauzer and Boleslavsky systems, which had served me so 'faithfully', to the Paulsen system was a major step, a natural attempt to broaden my creative palette and a stimu-

lation of fantasy in the sphere of new strategic problems. There turned out to be so much in the process of its understanding that it determined my tastes for a decade.

The text-book order of moves, which leads to the typical Paulsen starting position is usually given as 1 e4 c5 2 ♟f3 e6 3 d4 cd 4 ♟xd4 a6 and subsequently (say, on 5 ♟c3) — 5 ... ♞c7. As the late well-known theoretician Albert Bekker wrote in his monograph on the Sicilian Defence: '... The Paulsen brothers demonstrated the defensive capability of the queen positioned on c7, for the safeguarding of which the preparatory move a7-a6 is necessary'. To us this resounds with naivety since the virtue of Black's initial construction is now, of course, much more diverse and profound than suggested by the originators themselves.

The factors which nowadays determine Black's dynamic resources are the active (and not defensive!) position of the queen on the semi-open c-file, the possibility of an energetic advance of the b-pawn, and, following this, the development of the bishop on the long diagonal, and, finally, the active deployment of the dark-squared bishop, which is able to influence the central squares from either c5 or b4. Along with this, on

account of White's central control, and a certain restrained approach by Black, it is necessary to display circumspection in the treatment of White's possible action on the kingside.

Additionally, the introductory move order is often varied in our day so as to limit the choice of one's opponent's plans. So, as well as the move 4 ... a6, which allows the unimpeded clamping thrust 5 c4, or the active development 5 ♟d3 (which is not to everybody's taste), the manoeuvre 4 ... ♟c6 has many adherents (although in this case one has to contend with the thrust 5 ♟b5).

For me, over many years, it is precisely this move-order that has opened the way for the execution of the principled dynamic plan of play which is directed at seizing an early initiative.

Under the Banner of Flank Strategy

As will become clear from the examples given below, my treatment of the Paulsen Variation originated from an attempt, by concentrating forces on the queenside, to exercise my will and on the chance to divert my opponent from his routine plan of action on the kingside.

The following game demon-

strates such an opening conception, where the somewhat superficial play of my opponent allows Black to vividly demonstrate the merits of his plan.

Janosevic-Taimanov
Wijk aan Zee 1970

1	e4	c5
2	gf3	xc6
3	d4	cd
4	xd4	e6
5	xc3	

Not only the most natural, but also the best plan of deployment. I have also encountered in my practice, however, other schemes of development for White. For example:

(a) 5 c4 f6 6 c3 b4!? 7 xc6 bc 8 d3 e5 9 0-0 0-0 10 d2 a5!? 11 a4 d5 and Black has a good game. But further events prove interesting: 12 g5 de 13 xf6 wxd3 14 xe5 wxc4! 15 b6 wb5 16 xa8 (if 16 d4, then 16 ... h3!!) 16 ... xe5 17 b6 d6 18 g3 e6 19 e2 e3! 20 ael ec5 21 f4 wd4 22 fdl wb4 23 d7 ec4! 24 xc4 wxc4 25 eel! wd5 26 dxc5!? wxc5 27 wxe3 and the game soon arrived at a drawn conclusion (Gorky-Taimanov, telephone match 1986).

(b) 5 dxc6 bc 6 d3 gf6 7 0-0 d5 8 ed cd 9 c4 e7 10 cd xd5 11 e4 0-0 12 c3 ea6

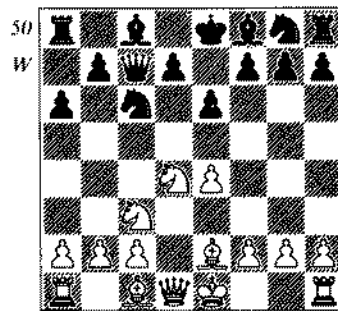
13 dxd5 ed 14 d3 xd3 15 wxd3 ef6 and play is level (Lein-Taimanov, Bulgaria 1977).

5	...	a6
6		xe2

This continuation is perhaps the most popular. The alternatives 6 ec3, 6 f4, 6 g3 and 6 dxc6 are examined in later examples.

6	...	xc7
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It is precisely this move that gives the game the character of the Paulsen. On 6 ... g7 the Taimanov system would arise and after 6 ... d6 — the Scheveningen variation.



7	f4	
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One of the main attempts at immediately 'claiming one's rights' on activity in the centre and on the kingside. This early pawn advance also has concrete substance — it restricts the opposition's choice of plans of development, as 7 ... gf6 is obviously bad now in view of 8 e5, as is 7 ... b4 due to 8 dxc6 bc 9 wd4. 7 ... ec5 8 e3 d6 is

also unconvincing, since after 9 wd3 g7 10 0-0-0 0-0 11 dxc6 ex3+ 12 wxe3 wxc6 13 d3 d8 14 hd1 Black comes under positional pressure due to the weakness of his d6 pawn (Minic-Taimanov, Lvov 1962).

Better alternatives are the more substantial continuations 7 ec3 and 7 0-0, which postpone the real battle to the future.

Conversely, the prophylactic move 7 a3, which may appear logical, would be unnecessarily cautious and not dangerous for Black. After 7 ... gf6 (also good is 7 ... b5 8 dxc6 wxc6 9 ec3 eb7 transposing to the variation examined below) 8 0-0 dxd4!? 9 wxd4 ed6!? 10 gh1 ec5 11 wd3 b5 12 f4 ex3 13 bc eb7 14 e5 de4 Black obtains an excellent position (Abramovic-Taimanov, Montpellier 1986).

7	...	b5!?
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'An eye for an eye'. In response to White's attempts to impose his will on the kingside, Black instantly commences active operations on the opposite side of the board. 'The spheres of influence' are now clearly divided and a double-edged conflict springs up, where the energy and precision of projected plans become especially important. To tell the truth, the possibility of such an uncompromising duel from the very first

moves also determined my inclination towards this variation.

Note that the continuation 7 ... dxd4 8 wxd4 de7 (in the spirit of the Taimanov system) which is often encountered, is less advisable, as the already executed 'Paulsen' move 5 ... xc7 is superfluous, and after 9 wf2! d6 10 ec3 Black runs into difficulties.

8		xc6
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This exchange, which is set to lure the black queen onto the weak a8-h1 diagonal (of course, to take on c6 with the pawn would be against general principles), is considered by theory to be the best opposition to Black's ambitious plan. Indeed, in the event of the primitive 8 ec3 eb7 9 0-0 after 9 ... ec5 (threatening 10 ... wb6) White would have to search for salvation in the variation 10 d5!? dce7!? 11 ex5 wxc5+ 12 wd4 wxd4 13 dxd4 b4 14 a4 (Davies-Taimanov, Lisbon 1958).

The preventative 8 a3 is even less advisable. This loss of tempo will cost White dear. After 8 ... eb7 9 ec3 ea5! 10 wd3 dc4 11 cl c8 12 d1 (otherwise 12 ... dxa3) 12 ... gf6 13 f2 e5! 14 fe dxe5 15 wg3 ec5 Black's initiative obtains a threatening character (Keres-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1959).

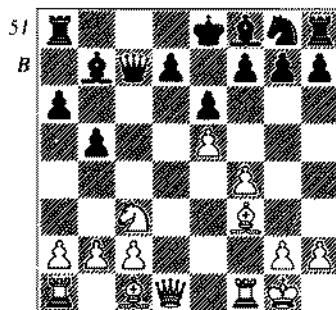
8	...	xc6
9		ef3

Of course, it is precisely this manoeuvre that represents White's ambitious intentions. Moreover, he has no other reasonable alternative: as on 9 0-0?! comes the unpleasant 9 ... b4 10 ♖b1 ♕f6 11 e5 ♕d5; and on 9 ♕e3?! the flashy blow 9 ... ♕a3! is possible.

9 ... ♕b7
10 e5

Logical, although a somewhat straightforward continuation. Note that the more strategic 10 ♕e3 also has its adherents and will be examined in the next example.

10 ... ♖c7
11 0-0



A critical position for this variation. At first glance the outcome of the opening is clearly favourable for White. He has an advantage in space and development and has a solid pawn centre. Black, however, is noticeably restrained, he has not yet begun the mobiliz-

ation of his kingside forces, his king is stuck in the centre of the board and his only active minor piece — the bishop on b7 — is doomed to exchange.

Nevertheless, the matter is by no means as simple as it seems. Black's lack of development in such a position of a semi-closed nature is not so very important, moreover, he has in reserve an eventual thrust of his bishop into the fray with check, his knight on g8 has the excellent post on f5 in prospect, whilst the backward d7-pawn may be used for an assault on an enemy central outpost and his influence on the c-file gives him the basis for counterplay on the queenside. If one adds that White's position is not entirely rosy (his bishop on c1 has no prospects and his king is a little exposed), then in any event one must evaluate this position as complicated, double-edged and by no means without prospects for Black.

11 ... ♖h6?!!
12 ♕e3

In the event of 12 ♕e4 ♕f5 the development of the bishop on c1 becomes a problem for White, even ignoring the threat of 13 ... ♕h4.

12 ... ♖d8

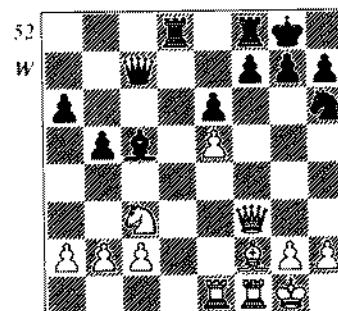
Black's play is energized like a compressed spring. His active

resource — the break d7-d6, comes into effect.

13 ♕f2

Against Tal (USSR 1974), Kupreichik tried 13 ♕e4 ♕f5 14 ♕d6+ here, however after 14 ... ♕xd6 15 ed ♖xd6! 16 ♕xb7 ♖xd1 17 ♖fxd1 ♕xe3 was 'back where he started'.

13 ... d6
14 ♖e2 ♕xf3
15 ♖xf3 de
16 fe ♕c5
17 ♖ae1 0-0



How sharply the picture of battle has changed over just seven moves to a clear advantage for Black! He has not only successfully concluded his development, but also has positioned his pieces (allowing for the eventual ... ♕f5) in the most active manner. Meanwhile White has only managed in this time to incur an isolated pawn, which demands constant care.

If one takes into account that the entire metamorphosis has occurred without any obvious mistake by White, then one can draw the conclusion that some sort of fundamental defect is concealed in his opening set-up. Could it be the early activity in the centre with 10 e5?

18 ♖h5?

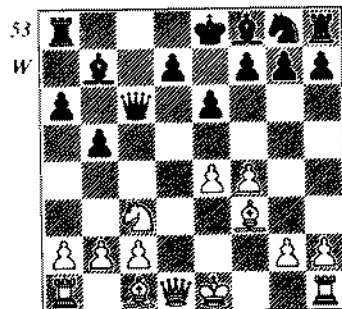
Janosevic, it seems, has not sensed any danger, otherwise he would certainly have opted for simplification, and after 18 ♕xc5 ♖xc5+ 19 ♖f2 retained a defensive capability. Now though, White's position quickly collapses.

18 ... ♖d2
19 ♖e2 ♖fd8
20 ♖xd2 ♖xd2
21 ♕xc5 ♖xc5+
22 ♖h1 ♖e3!
23 ♖d1 b4

White resigns.

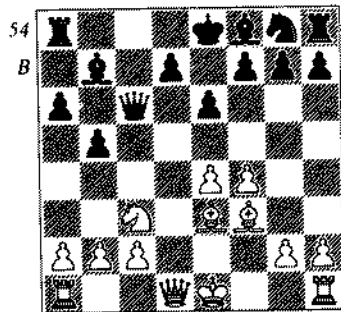
On the retreat of the white knight, 24 ... g6 decides. Of course, the success of Black's opening strategy in this game was mainly thanks to his opponent, who allowed the realization of dynamic potential in Black's flank activity with the utmost ease. That is why, in the interests of objectivity, we shall turn to a more instructive analysis of this particular plan of Black's counterplay.

Let us return to the introductory position after nine moves.



In the preceding example Janosevic played 10 e5 here, which, as the course of the game demonstrated, did not justify itself: the blockaded e5 pawn became an object of attack; and the weakness of the f5 square, a vital positional concession.

Therefore, over many years of tournament practice attempts were undertaken to ally White's alluring opening construction with the retention of a flexible pawn centre. Theory promoted the developing move 10 e3 as the order of the day.



In this way White, retaining his own trump (the e4–e5 advance) hurries in the first instance to harmoniously conclude his development with not just the option of castling short but perhaps also, eventually, on the queenside, which of course significantly widens the choice of active plans. Highly circumspect reaction is demanded from Black in this position. I have had to face similar problems time and again, and shall give here the most memorable games.

Balashov–Taimanov

Moscow v Leningrad match 1986

10 e3 c8!?

The most logical continuation, which is directed at the activation of the familiar flank play. Another treatment is however also possible — piece pressure on the centre. I tried this in a game against Lukin in the Leningrad Ch. 1987, which went 10 ... b4!? 11 d4 f6 12 0-0 (12 xf6 gf 13 d4 is not dangerous in view of 13 ... c5!? or 12 e5 because of 12 ... e4) 12 ... xc3 13 xc3 xe4 14 xg7 g8 15 d4 f5!? 16 c3 d6 17 a4 d7!? and, despite the somewhat unusual position of his king, Black's active pieces allow him to maintain approximate equality.

11 a3

To tell the truth, when an opponent resorts to such prophylaxis, my playing optimism obtains an extra impulse. However, as practice shows, White does not achieve much with other continuations either. For example:

(a) 11 e5 c7 12 0-0 e7 13 xb7 xb7 14 d3 f5 15 f2 h5 (Mini–Janosevic, Yugoslavia 1966);

(b) 11 0-0 c5 12 f2 (or 12 xc5 xc5+ 13 f2 e7 14 e5 xf3 15 xf3 d5, Kupreichik–Krnjic, Sombor 1970) 12 ... c7 13 e5 f5!? 14 xb7 xb7 15 a3 e7 (Unzicker–Hartston, Gstaad 1973);

(c) 11 d4 d6!? 12 a7 b8 13 xb8 xb8 (Cooper–Penrose, England 1963).

11 ... c4!?

This energetic is perhaps preferable to the traditional manoeuvre 11 ... c7 if only just because it limits the opponent's options.

12 d4

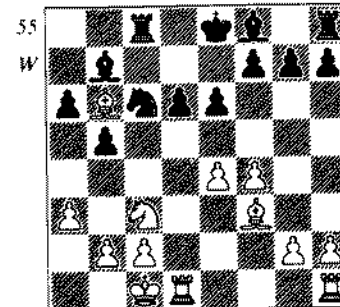
Otherwise White would have to contend with the activation of Black's play after 12 ... b4. But in the Sicilian Defence Black, as a rule, has nothing to fear in the endgame.

12 ... xd4

13 xd4 e7

14 0-0-0 c6

15 b6 d6



A complicated endgame has arisen where some advantage in space does not guarantee White any tangible benefits since Black's position is solid. It is interesting that an analogous position arose previously, but by different means, in the game Kupreichik–Tal, Moscow 1981.

16 d2

Kupreichik played 16 a4 here, to which Black should reply 16 ... ba 17 xa4 b8 with a fully defensible position.

16 ... g5!?

An interesting attempt to seize the initiative by tactical means. Incidentally, a similar break is characteristic of many endgame positions in the Paulsen system (and not only in endgames). Its main aim is to acquire an outpost on e5.

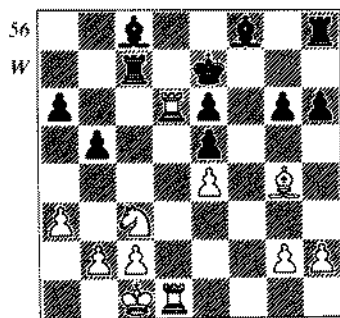
17 fg

The acceptance of the sacrifice is forced. On 17 g3? there would follow 17 ... gf 18 gf h6.

- 17 ... ♖e5
- 18 ♗d4 ♖h6
- 19 g6!?

The natural concise reaction which allows the balance to be kept.

- 19 ... fg
- 20 ♗g4 ♖e7
- 21 ♗xe5 de
- 22 ♖hd1 ♖c7
- 23 ♖d6 ♗c8



The tactical phase of the game is over. Black has succeeded in provoking the exchange of the important enemy bishop and has completely neutralized his opponent's initiative. True, he has had to resign himself to having doubled pawns in the centre, but these pawns, as often happens in the Sicilian defence, firmly control the central squares.

On account of the eventual activation of the bishop on c8 Black's position may in fact be considered as having better pro-

spects. Although, of course, White has his own 'trumps' and he is out of danger for the present.

- 24 ♖a2!?
- 25 ♗e2 ♖d7
- 26 ♖xd7+ ♗xd7
- 27 ♖b4 a5
- 28 ♖d3 ♗g7

The transfer of the knight to d3 has restrained Black's planned activity. The game rapidly moves to a peaceful conclusion. There followed:

- 29 b4!?
- 30 ab ♗c6
- 31 ♗f3 g5
- 32 h3 g4
- 33 hg hg
- 34 ♗xg4 ♗xe4
- 35 ♗f3 ♗xf3
- 36 gf ♖f8
- 37 ♖g1 ♗h6+
- 38 ♖d1 ♖xf3
- 39 ♗xe5 ♖f5
- 40 ♖d3

Drawn.

So, in this game too, where White followed the approved paths of theory, Black succeeded in upholding the reputation of his early flank action. It may be that White's opening plan, which is connected with an attempt to seize the centre at the very beginning of the game, is rather over-optimistic.

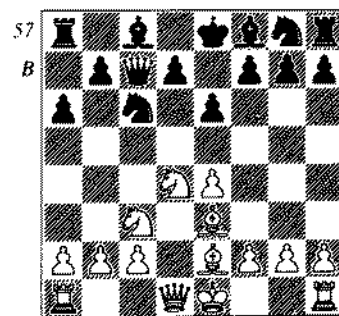
In any event, the evolution of this scheme led White to another way of handling the variation, the

examination of which we shall now move on to.

Muhutdinov-Taimanov
USSR Spartakiad, Moscow 1963

- 1 e4 c5
- 2 ♖f3 ♗c6
- 3 d4 cd
- 4 ♗xd4 e6
- 5 ♗c3 a6
- 6 ♗e2 ♖c7
- 7 ♗e3

Thus, instead of the committal, ambitious continuation 7 f4, White opts for a more disciplined developing move, thereby consolidating his position in the centre. True, the early determination of the position of the bishop also has its dark side. Incidentally, one should note that White's sixth and seventh move are often made in reverse order.



7 ... b5
The reader is already acquainted with this plan of early

flank operations from the previous examples. It is also fully appropriate in the current concrete situation. Moreover, the position of the bishop on e3 opens up for Black an additional possibility of fighting for the initiative by way of the original manoeuvre 7 ... ♖a5, whereby the knight is not only protected from exchange, but is also directed towards the c4 outpost. In the game Sax-Taimanov (Vrnjaka Banja 1974) there followed 8 0-0 b5 9 ♖d2 and here instead of 9 ... ♗b7, which leads to a White initiative after 10 ♗f4! e5 11 ♗g3 ♖f6 12 ♖g5!, Black could obtain a promising position by way of the natural 9 ... ♗c4 10 ♗xc4 ♖xc4. Note that there is an alternative plan of approximately equal merit from the diagrammed position, employing a method of piece pressure against the centre by way of 7 ... ♖f6 8 0-0 ♗b4. This sequence is given further on.

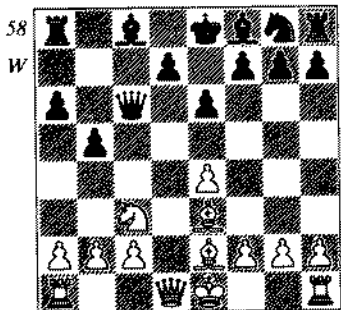
8 ♗xc6

This move, which serves the two purposes of exchanging the knight, which was destined for a transfer to the c4 outpost, and 'luring' the queen onto the vulnerable h1-a8 diagonal — an idea which the reader has already encountered — is undoubtedly the strongest. On the passive 8 a3 ♗b7 9 0-0 ♖f6 (19 ... ♖a5! is also good) 10 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 11 ♗d3 ♖b7! 12 f3 d6

13 ♖e2 ♙e7 Black achieves a promising position without effort (Poga-Taimanov, Budapest 1961).

8 ... ♗xc6

Of course, the capture 8 ... dc would be inconsistent to say the least. Also, in this case by way of both 9 f4 ♙b7 (or 9 ... ♗f6 10 e5 ♗d5 11 ♗xd5 ed 12 c3) 10 0-0 c5 11 f5! ♗f6 12 fe fe 13 ♙h5+ ♗xh5 14 ♗xh5+ g6 15 ♗g4 (Stein-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1962); and by means of 9 0-0 ♗f6 10 f4 b4 11 ♗a4 c5 (if 11 ... ♗xe4 then 12 ♙b6 ♗d7 13 ♙f3) 12 c3! ♙b8 13 cb ♙xb4 14 ♙c1! (Krogius-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1962) White seizes the initiative.



9 e5

A variation on a familiar theme. Only in this way can White fight for the initiative.

On the passive 9 a3 (this position is often encountered in practice by way of different move orders, for example: 7 a3 b5 8

♗xc6 ♗xc6 9 ♙e3, or 6 ♙e3 ♗c7 7 a3 b5 8 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 9 ♙e2) Black comfortably solves all of his opening problems without difficulty.

I shall share my own experiences of this position:

1. Zaitsev-Taimanov (USSR Ch. 1962) 9 ... ♙b7 10 ♗d4 ♙c8 11 0-0-0 ♗f6 12 ♙d2 ♙c5!? 13 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 14 ♙xc5 ♙xc5 15 ♙f3 g5! 16 ♙hd1 h5 and Black has excellent prospects in the resulting endgame.

Hasin-Taimanov (USSR Ch. 1961) 9 ... ♙b7 10 0-0 ♗e7 11 ♙f3 ♗g6 12 e5 ♗c7 13 ♙d4 ♙c8 14 ♙e1 ♙e7 15 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 16 ♗e4 0-0 17 ♙c3 ♙c4 18 ♗f3 ♗c7 19 ♙ad1 a5!? 20 ♗d6 ♙xd6 21 ed ♗b6 22 ♙e4 ♙c6 23 h4 f6!? 24 ♙g4 ♗e5 25 ♙xe5 fe 26 ♗g3 ♙f7 and Black captures the initiative.

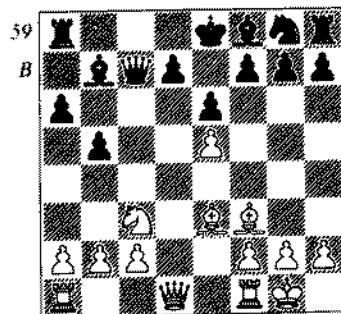
Bredvut-Taimanov (Luxembourg 1963) 9 ... ♙b7 10 ♙f3 ♗e7 11 0-0 ♗g6 12 e5 ♗c7 13 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 14 f4 ♙e7 15 ♗d3 0-0 16 ♙ad1 ♙fd8 17 ♗e4 ♗c7 18 ♙d2 d5 19 ed ♙xd6 20 ♙fd1 ♙ac8 21 ♗f3 ♙e7 22 ♙xd8+ ♙xd8 23 g3 ♗e7!? 24 ♙f2 ♗f5 25 ♗d3 ♙f6 26 ♗d7 h5!? and Black obtains a positional advantage.

It is instructive how in all of these examples White's loss of time in the opening due to the tempo spent on his prophylaxis turns

out to be so essential that it allows Black to take the initiative almost unopposed!

But let's return to the main variation.

9 ... ♙b7
10 ♙f3 ♗c7
11 0-0



A familiar picture. Analogous formations have been repeatedly encountered in the previous examples, although with certain differences. In earlier cases, the white bishop stood on c1 with the f2 pawn on f4. Is this distinction significant? Of course, the general strategy of White's conception remains unchanged, but nevertheless fresh nuances appear in the characteristic of the position. The pluses for White are better piece development and a more solid shelter for his king, the drawback is the vulnerability of his central e5 pawn. These features also have

an influence on the subsequent course of events.

11 ... ♙d8!?

The most advisable continuation. The black rook opposes White's eventual pressure along the d-file and supports the possible future attack against the central enemy pawn outpost. In the present situation this is also connected with the concrete threat of 12 ... ♙xf3 13 ♗xf3 ♗xe5.

11 ... ♙c8 is a less convincing manoeuvre. In this case White can freely choose between the solid plan of centralizing his forces by 12 ♙xb7 ♗xb7 13 ♗d3 ♗e7 14 ♙ad1 ♗f5 (or 14 ... ♗g6 15 f4 ♗h4 16 ♗e4 ♙c4 17 ♙d4 ♗f5 18 c3) 15 ♙c1 ♙e7 16 c3 (Westerein-Taimanov, Wijk aan Zee 1970); and the sharper attempt to obtain the initiative by way of a gambit — 12 a4!? ♙xf3 13 ♗xf3 b4 14 ♗e4 ♗xe5 15 ♙f4 ♗f5 16 ♙ad1 (Mikenas-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1962), in both cases achieving attractive chances.

It remains to add that the attempt at speedy mobilization of the kingside forces by way of 11 ... ♗e7 meets the tactical retort — 12 ♙c5!

12 ♙xb7 ♗xb7
13 ♙g5!?

A tempting idea. In provoking the exchange of bishops, White hurries to seize control of the dark

squares in his opponent's camp. However, this involves a significant loss of time, which allows Black to conclude the mobilization of his forces without problems.

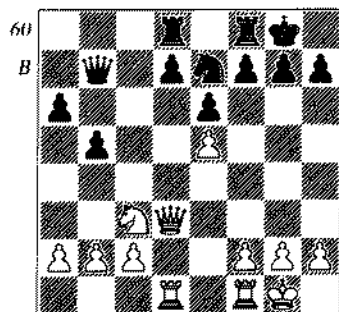
Another possible plan for White is centralization by means of 13 ♖d3 d5 (on 13 ... d6?! comes the unpleasant reply 14 ♙ad1 and 14 ... de is impossible due to 15 ♖xd8+!) 14 ♖e2 with the transfer of the knight to d4.

The less advisable 13 ♖d4 has also been played. After 13 ... ♖e7 14 ♙ad1 ♖f5 15 ♖b6 ♖xb6 16 ♙xb6 ♙b8 17 ♙d4 ♙c8 Black has a comfortable game.

- 13 ... ♙e7
- 14 ♙xe7 ♖xe7
- 15 ♖d3 0-0

The manoeuvre 15 ... ♖b8 also warrants consideration, in order to gain time for the d7-d6 break. I played this against Petrosian (USSR Ch. 1969) and achieved equality.

- 16 ♙ad1



Time to take stock of the opening duel. At first glance it seems highly favourable for White — he has a space advantage, pressure on the d-file, where Black has been left with a backward pawn, and White has the alluring outpost on d6, free piece play, and he is generally threatening to suppress his opponent by way of the manoeuvre ♖c3-e4-d6. But, as often happens in asymmetrical 'Paulsen' constructions, a simple evaluation according to statistical factors does not fully reflect the content of the position.

Weighing the chances of either side, it is impossible to disregard the typical dynamic potential of Black's piece play within this structure, for it is highly essential. The vulnerability of the enemy e5 pawn, the possibility of its siege and undermining in conjunction with the manoeuvring of his own forces opens up prospects for Black, which should not be underestimated. In any event, it would be correct to say that in the forthcoming middlegame each side has their trumps, and the result of the confrontation depends directly on who is best able to exploit the energy of these trumps.

- 16 ... ♙g6
- 17 f4?!

One can understand my opponent, who rushes to

strengthen his central outpost more solidly. Moreover, the alternative — 17 ♙fe1 — appears unattractive to him in view of the reply 17 ... b4 with the subsequent 18 ... ♙c8, creating pressure on the c2 pawn. But nevertheless, on no account is it worth weakening the position of the king. It is precisely this motif that later gains major significance and turns out to be very unpleasant for White.

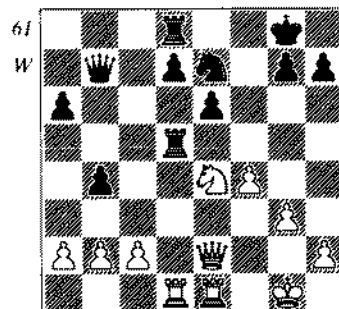
- 17 ... ♙f6!

Black's motto is dynamism! The struggle for the initiative demands energetic measures.

- 18 ef ♙xf6!
- 19 g3

White must now reconcile himself with his new positional weaknesses. 19 f5 is no use because of 19 ... ♙h4.

- 19 ... ♙f5!?
- 20 ♙fe1 b4!?
- 21 ♖e4 ♙d5
- 22 ♖e2 ♖e7



If this diagram is compared with the previous one, it becomes evident that after a few moves a striking metamorphosis has occurred on the board. Almost nothing remains of the attractiveness of White's formation — his advantage in space has been lost, his central outpost exchanged, his pressure on the d-file neutralized and his king's cover significantly weakened. And, conversely, Black's play has been vitalized his pieces have gained space and firm footholds in the centre. And this is the result of just one inaccuracy, made by Muhtudinov on the 17th move ... In truth, there are many mysteries concealed in the Paulsen system!

- 23 e4!?

To my opponent's credit, the sharp change in the character of the contest has not unsettled him (which often happens in similar cases!), and he coolly takes necessary measures to limit Black's active possibilities. Above all, control over the central squares is necessary along with a degree of simplification by way of exchanges.

- 23 ... bc
- 24 ♖xc3 ♙xd1
- 25 ♙xd1 ♖f5
- 26 ♖e4 ♙c8
- 27 ♖f2 ♙e5
- 28 ♖e4 ♖e8
- 29 ♙d2

With well thought out manoeuvres it seems as though White has succeeded in repairing the coordination of his pieces and sealed the approach to his king, but, all the same, complete safety is still far away — Black controls the only open file and his d7 pawn, until recently serving as an object of anxiety, is preparing to declare itself in a new capacity — from a 'backward' pawn it may become a 'passed' pawn ...

29 ... ♖c4
30 ♗e5 h6
31 ♗e2??

This pointless retreat is the first sign that Muhutdinov is not enduring the tension of this difficult multi-planned contest. In as far as he, seemingly, intends the 'evacuation' of his king from its unsafe refuge on the file at the edge of the board, this should be implemented without withdrawing the queen from an active position. After the more natural 31 ♖g2 ♗c6+ 32 ♖h3 White's pieces find a certain freedom of operation.

31 ... ♖c1+
32 ♖g2

Perhaps my opponent had initially planned to defend with 32 ♖d1 here, but then noticed that this is bad in view of 32 ... ♖c2 33 ♖d2 ♖d4. In any case, it is now obvious that the manoeuvre 31

♗e2 was mistaken.

32 ... ♗c6+
33 ♖h3

Of course, 33 ♗f3?? will not do in view of 33 ... ♖e3+, and on 33 ♗e4 there would follow 33 ... d5.

33 ... ♖g1

The 'clouds' gather above the white king ...

34 ♗e4 d5
35 ♗e2 d4!?
36 ♗e4 ♗e8
37 ♗f3 ♖e1!?

It is instructive how Black's pieces in this part of the battle step by step encroach on White's position.

38 ♖e2

On 38 ♖d3 there would follow, of course, 38 ... ♖e3 and if 39 ♗d1, then 39 ... ♗g6.

38 ... ♖f1
39 ♖g2

Or 39 ♖d2 ♖e3! and 40 ♖xd4 is impossible due to 40 ... ♖xf2!

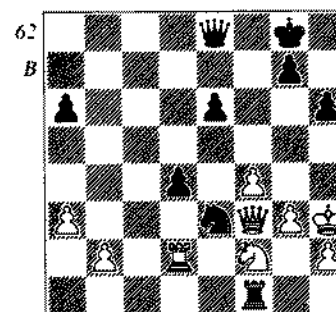
39 ... ♖a1
40 a3 ♖e3+
41 ♖h3 ♖f1!?
42 ♖d2 (62)

42 g4 does not help either, due to 42 ... ♖g1! with the threat of 43 ... ♖xg4!

42 ... e5!

The signal for the decisive assault!

43 fe ♗xe5
44 ♗a8+ ♖f7
45 ♗b7+ ♖g8



46 ♗a8+ ♖h7!

With such a concentration of forces even the exchange of queens does not impede the attack.

47 ♗e4+ ♗xe4
48 ♖xe4 g5!
49 g4

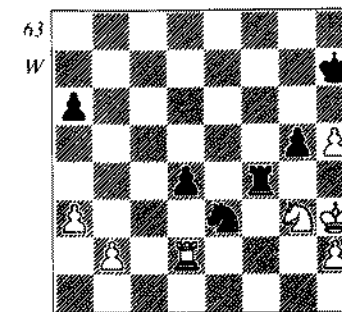
The d4 pawn is invulnerable — 49 ♖xd4? g4+ 50 ♖h4 ♖f5+. 49 ♖f2 does not help either; after 49 ... ♖xf2 50 ♖xf2 h5 51 g4 (otherwise mate) 51 ... h4 the knight ending is hopeless for White, since his king is permanently cut off and cannot take part in the battle.

But there now follows a showy problem-like finale.

49 ... ♖f3+
50 ♖g3 h5!
51 gh ♖f4!

A fascinating picture!

52 ... ♖h4 mate is threatened, and with the forced retreat of the knight (52 ♖e2 or 52 ♖h1) 52 ... ♖h4+ 53 ♖g3 ♖f1+! decides.



Therefore White resigned. This game, I must confess, as an adherent of the Paulsen system, is very much in the spirit of the variation, in so far as it successfully revealed the dynamic potential of Black's pieces with the utmost energy and ingenuity, even with limited means.

Nevertheless, the 'key' finally fitted my 'stock' plan of active operations, a plan which served, as seen from the games examined, 'faithfully and loyally' for many years.

Fortunately, disappointment did not touch me directly, although danger came close ...

Geller-Taimanov

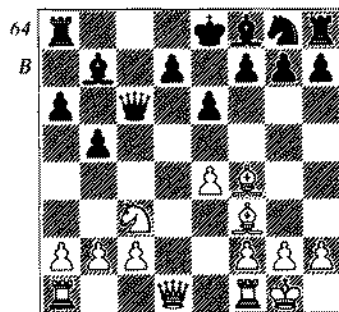
Palma de Majorca Interzonal 1970

1	e4	c5
2	♖f3	e6
3	d4	cd
4	♖xd4	♖c6
5	♖c3	♗c7

6 ♖e2 a6
7 0-0 b5

Of course, this move was unhesitatingly played by me. The approved plan of active flank play was successfully upheld in the tests of practice and time, and still Mikhail Botvinnik — my first teacher — recommended not to give up the 'stock' variations until a convincing refutation had been found. Could I then suggest that my game against Geller turned out to be one of the last I played using this scheme? What difference is there then between the continuation 7 0-0, employed in this contest and those continuations encountered earlier — 7 f4, 7 a3 and 7 ♖e3 — which caused no particular difficulties?

8 ♗xc6 ♜xc6
9 ♕f3 ♖b7
10 ♕f4!



Eureka! This thrust suddenly changes the whole picture. The merits of flexible early castling

immediately becomes evident and is no small thing — White's dark-squared bishop occupies a highly promising diagonal, the e-file remains open for the 'artillery' battery, whilst his advantage in development broadens the tactical horizons — there is even the threat of a knight sacrifice on d5 hanging over Black! I recall how my sense of danger gripped me then. Firstly I realized that the neglect of my kingside problems in favour of activity on the queenside may be severely punished ...

10 ... d6

Here good advice is hard to offer.

On 10 ... ♗d8 there may follow 11 a4 b4 12 ♗d5!; on 10 ... ♗e7 comes the unpleasant 11 ♕d6 ♗g6 12 e5 (Parma-Krnic, Vratz 1973); and on 10 ... ♜c4 (as I played in 1971 in one of my training games with Tal), there is the strong 11 ♕d6 ♕xd6 12 ♜xd6 ♗e7 13 ♗ad1 ♜c6 14 ♜g4!

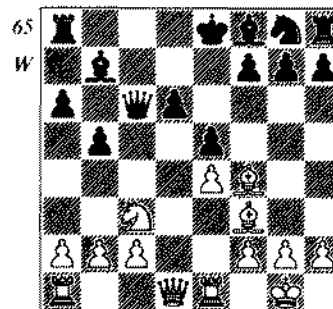
11 ♗e1 e5(65)

There is nothing else.

12 ♕d2?!

After this sluggish retreat Black may breathe a sigh of relief. Geller did not find the combinational conclusion to his excellent opening idea.

Just two and a half years later in Tbilisi a truly strong and effective way of realizing White's positional



advantage was demonstrated by Velimirovic in a game against Vasyukov. The Yugoslavian Grandmaster played 12 a4! and after 12 ... b4 (12 ... ef is of course bad in view of 13 e5, but 12 ... ba would perhaps be the lesser of the many evils) went over to the offensive by way of 13 ♗d5 ef 14 c3! (only thus! On 14 e5 0-0-0! 16 ♗e7+ ♗xe7 17 ♕xc6 ♗xc6 play is in Black's favour). There followed: 14 ... b3 (if 14 ... bc, then 15 ♗c1!) 15 e5 0-0-0 16 ♜xb3 ♗b8 17 ♗b4 ♜d7 18 ♕xb7 ♗xb7 19 ♜d5+ and White won.

Here Geller 'gave me an amnesty' from such a fate ...

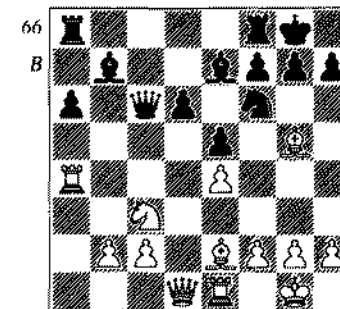
Events have now taken a more favourable direction for Black.

12 ... ♗f6
13 a4 ba?!
14 ♗xa4 ♕e7
15 ♕g5 0-0

Now that Black's king has found a peaceful retreat he has nothing to fear.

16 ♕e2

Now 16 ♕xf6 was better. Although White cannot reckon on much in this case either.



16 ... ♗xe4!

An elegant tactical operation, immediately solving all his problems.

17 ♗xc4

Perhaps the only answer!

17 ... ♜xa4
18 ♕xe7 ♜xe4
19 ♕f3 ♜b4
20 ♕xb7 ♜xb7
21 ♕xf8 ♗xf8
22 ♜xd6 ♜xb2
23 ♜xa6

Drawn.

Thus, I avoided the threat. But it is necessary to draw some conclusions. If one's favourite variation, even after serving successfully over many years, is dealt a perceptible blow (and not accidentally but convincingly!), one has to find the courage to recog-

nize an imperfection in the conception and unflinchingly switch over to a search for a suitable alternative. So my opening repertoire was widened, firstly with a new treatment of the Paulsen system, and thereupon at its very basis by a detailed consideration of a different and original 'stock' system.

But so as not to leave the idea, which brought me many creative joys, on a sad note, I shall recall as a parting pleasure one of the most brilliant games of my career, where the by now well-known theme was adorned with tactical variations, enriching its familiar guise with new colours. I will add that this contest had a special significance for me, since the win opened a new path in the International tournament elimination cycle in the battle for the World Championship.

Lutikov-Taimanov
USSR Ch. 1969

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	♝c6
3	d4	cd
4	♗xd4	e6
5	♗c3	♞c7
6	♗e3	a6
7	♗d3	

This method of deployment had many followers in those days. The

positive sides to it are obvious — White plans active operations on the kingside and not only 'increases the value' of the light-squared bishop, but also leaves the d1-h5 diagonal free for the queen to link up with the attack. But there are defects — the obstruction of the d-file, which often serves White as a help in the development of central operations, whilst the bishop on d3 drops into the 'zone of reach' of Black's knight, which at times leads to its exchange.

7 ... b5

Should one be surprised that, in the deciding game of the last round of the USSR Championships, I resort to my favourite weapon?

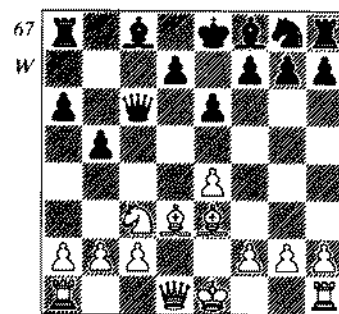
Theory prefers a more 'solid' plan here to quickly mobilize the kingside forces by way of 7 ... ♗f6 8 0-0 (8 ♞e2 ♗d6 9 0-0-0 ♗e5 10 ♗xc6 bc 11 ♗a4 ♞b8 is interesting, Gipslis-Taimanov, USSR 1959) and now either 8 ... ♗xd4 9 ♗xd4 ♗c5 or 8 ... ♗d6 or 8 ... ♗e5. But these possibilities are discussed further ahead.

8 ♗xc6

The well-versed reader already knows that such a method of play holds the best prospects for White. On 8 0-0 ♗b7 9 a4 (or 9 ♗b3 d6!) 9 ... b4 10 ♗ce2 ♗f6 11 ♗b3 ♗g4 12 ♗f4 ♗d6 13 ♗xd6 ♞xd6 14 ♗g3 ♗ge5 15 ♗e2 ♞xd1

16 ♞axd1 g5!? Black has no problems (Cardoso-Gonzales, Olot 1975).

8 ... ♞xc6



A new variation on a familiar theme, where just one nuance (the bishop on d3 instead of e2) changes the whole character of the game — White, as usual, pins his hopes on active operations on the kingside, where the queen may also be thrust. Black adds to his usual trumps (the c-file and the pawn on b5) still one more — pressure on the a8-h1 diagonal, where there is no 'official opponent'.

9 ♗d4

Lutikov unequivocally aims his long-range guns at the future position of the black king. The more conservative continuation 9 0-0 ♗b7 10 ♞e2 deserves consideration, although in this case Black completes his development with no worries via 10 ... b4 11 ♗b1 ♗f6 12 ♗d2 d5.

The preventive continuation 9 a3 is also encountered, but is hardly appropriate. As is well-known, loss of tempi in such a sharp variation always incurs drawbacks. The game Minic-Taimanov (Palma de Majorca 1970) is a good demonstration of how Black can succeed in creating pressure almost automatically along the long diagonal: 9 ... ♗b7 10 0-0 ♗e7 11 ♞g4 (on 11 f4, 11 ... ♗f5! 12 ♗f2 ♗c5!? is possible) 11 ... ♗g6 12 f4 ♗c5 13 ♗xc5 ♞xc5+ 14 ♗h1 0-0 15 ♞ae1 f6!? 16 ♗e2 ♞ae8 17 ♗g3?! (17 c3 is better) 17 ... ♞d4! 18 ♗h5 f5! 19 ef ef 20 ♞g5 (20 ♗xf5 is impossible due to 20 ... ♞xe1 21 ♞xe1 ♞xf5! 22 ♞xf5 ♗xg2+! 23 ♗xg2 ♗h4+) 20 ... ♞xe1 21 ♞xe1 ♞xb2 22 h3 ♞xa3 and Black won.

9 ... ♗b7
10 ♞e2 ♗e7
11 f4 b4

Both sides have consistently realized their strategic plans. Who has won the battle for the initiative?

12 ♗b1

The more flexible continuation 12 ♗d1 deserves attention.

12 ... ♗g6
13 ♞f2 ♗d6!

Black's motto — swiftness and dynamism!

Essentially, each of the series of Black's moves is directed at

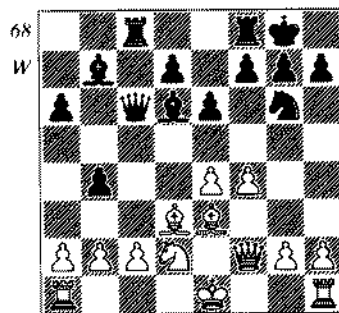
winning time for the activation of forces.

14 ♗e3

This, of course, is an acknowledgement of failure in White's opening formation, but what else?

In the event of 14 ♗xg7 there would follow 14 ... ♘xf4! 15 ♗xh8 ♘xd3+ 16 cd ♖cl+ 17 ♕e2 ♗xh1; with 14 e5 — 14 ... ♗e7 15 0-0 ♘h4 would be unpleasant for White; and on 14 g3 — 14 ... e5 is possible with excellent play for Black.

14 ... 0-0
15 ♘d2 ♗ac8



It is perfectly obvious that the first part of the contest has turned out favourably for Black. He has completed his development fully and, although the positions of certain pieces (the knight on g6, the bishop on d6) still require 'amendments', the prospect of active queenside play promises Black an attractive initiative in the forth-

coming middlegame. Nevertheless, the time has not come yet for categorical conclusions. The position bears an asymmetrical, original character and White's spacial advantage in conjunction with his powerful pawn centre must not be underestimated.

16 h4!?

True to his aggressive style Lutikov resorts to 'strong-arm' tactics. Such a tactic, in any event, demands the utmost accuracy of play from the opposition. More reserved players probably prefer castling kingside or even queenside.

16 ... ♖c7!?

A cunning manoeuvre. By exploiting the fact that the defending of the f4 pawn with 17 g3 is connected with a perceptible weakening of the long diagonal (which would allow the undertaking of advantageous tactical operations in the centre by way of 17 ... f5), Black provokes the advance of the e-pawn making space and creating outposts for his pieces.

17 e5 ♗c5
18 h5 ♗xe3
19 ♗xe3 ♕e7
20 ♘c4

On the tempting 20 ♕e4 there may follow 20 ... ♘f5 21 ♗f2 d6! 22 ed ♘xd6 23 ♘xd6 ♗xd6 0-0-0 ♖c5 with a comfortable

game for Black.

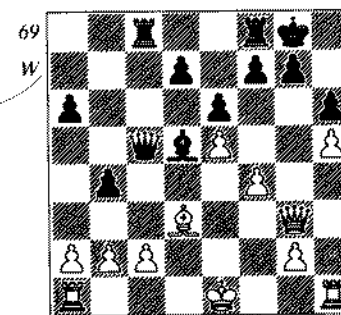
20 ... ♘f5
21 ♗d2

On 21 ♗xf5 Black could choose between the prosaic 21 ... ♗xc4 22 ♗d3 ♗d5 and the romantic 21 ... ef 22 ♘d6 ♗xc2 23 ♘xc8 ♗xc8 with good prospects in both cases.

21 ... ♗d5!?
22 ♕e3 ♕xe3
23 ♗xe3 ♖c5!?
24 ♗g3

Of course, the ending after 24 ♗xc5 ♗xc5 is clearly in Black's favour.

24 ... h6



As a result of lively piece skirmishes play has simplified and Black's positional advantages are revealed with convincing effect. His pieces occupy active positions, while White has yet to solve the problems of king safety, as he is stuck in the centre.

25 ♗h4

A despairing attempt to 'stir

up trouble', leading to unforeseen consequences.

25 ... ♗g1+?!

The simple 25 ... ♕h8 26 ♗g4 ♗g8 would have deprived White of any illusions. This impulsive check (nerves!) sharply transforms the battle picture. As noted by my second, Gik: 'after this move the contest somewhat loses its strategic completeness, but thereupon gains in beauty ...'

26 ♕d2

Objectively speaking, 26 ♕e2 would be more precise, after which Black, by way of 26 ... ♗xc2+ 27 ♗xc2 ♗c4+ 28 ♕d2 (28 ♕f3? ♗xa1 29 ♗g4 ♗f1+ 30 ♕e3 ♖e2+ and 31 ... ♗xc2) 28 ... ♗d4+ 29 ♕cl ♗g1+, could force a draw, but this was hardly the most attractive. However, who could tell where White's king would be safest in such confusion?

26 ... ♗d4

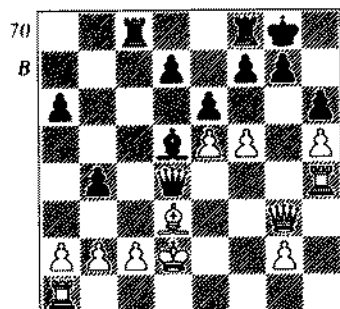
Back quickly!

Bad, of course, are both 26 ... ♗xg2+ 27 ♗xg2 ♗xg2 in view of 28 ♗g1 ♗d5 29 ♗hg4, and 26 ... ♗xa1 due to 27 ♗g4. Now though, on 27 ♗g4 the retort 27 ... ♗e4! 28 ♗xg7+ ♕h8 is sufficient, leaving White helpless.

27 f5!

An extremely unpleasant blow! White's counterattack appears threatening indeed. Black's queen is under fire, and if it retreats, then

the continuation 28 f6 decides. But events take a different turn.



27 ... ♖xc2+!!

Surprising and very effective. White's king must now 'cast caution to the winds', and is tested by a similar ferocity to that which he was preparing for his opponent.

28 ♔xc2 ♖b3+!

29 ♔d1

It appeared to Lutikov dangerous to play 29 ab in view of 29 ... ♗xb3+ and if 30 ♔xb3, then 30 ... ♖b8+. But it is not obligatory to take the bishop and the retreat 30 ♔d2 would leave chances of saving the game after 30 ... ♗xb2+ 31 ♔e3.

29 ... ♗g1+

30 ♗e1 ♗xg2!

White's pieces are so disparate that one can permit oneself to attack a rook down, without even forcing events.

31 ♗f1 ♗f3+

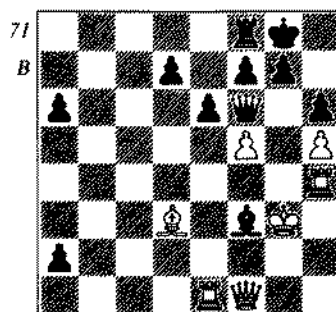
32 ♔e1 ♗xb2!

33 ♖b1 ♗xe5+

34 ♔f2 ♖a

35 ♖e1 ♗f6

36 ♔g3



36 ... ♗g2!

A study-like idea of deflection — it is impossible to take the bishop with the king due to the loss of the rook on h4, or with the queen in view of the loss of the rook on e1 after 37... a1(♖). Black thereby gains an important tempo in the attack.

37 ♗g1 ef

An unusual correlation of forces. For the sacrificed rook Black, in short time time, has succeeded in destroying six hostile pawns! Not letting the initiative slip for an instant.

38 ♗d4 ♗g5+

39 ♔h2 ♗e4!

And this is the study idea of screening! Both 40 ... ♗g2 mate and 40 ... ♗xh4+ are threatened.

40 ♖hx4 fe

41 ♗xc4 ♗xh5+

White resigns.

The emotional outcome of this fascinating contest was summed up many years later by that fine Soviet writer and great connoisseur of chess art, Leonid Zorin. He recalled: 'While the game was being played, I lived, what is called, a full life. It was the tension of the mind, the implications of Taimanov's inspiration, the excitement of the struggle, the hopes that changed to confusion and, finally, the spirited ascent, when the last accord was sounded of this indeed polyphonic composition, and my friend Mark Taimanov, having gained victory, became a participant in the Interzonal tournament'.

An Object of Counterplay — the e4 Pawn

Among the many varied motifs in the struggle for the initiative, which are scattered liberally in the Paulsen system, one of the most characteristic and effective is that of piece pressure against White's powerful pawn centre, particularly against the e4 pawn outpost. This can be traced back to the hypermodern ideas of Aron Nimzowitsch, who in his time innovatively maintained that 'one may substitute possession of the centre with pressure exerted by one's own pieces against the enemy centre'.

And the Paulsen scheme has opened up different prospects for such a strategy. Indeed, it is as though the queen on c7 is blocking the e4 pawn; the standard advance b7-b5 not only secures the chance of the flank development of the light-squared bishop for an attack on the vulnerable pawn, but also creates an indirect threat on its defender the knight at c3; and, finally, the subsequent linking up of the knight on f6 in the siege in conjunction with the eventual thrust of the bishop to b4, creating a real basis for an active plan, the main aim of which is to force the advance e4-e5, and to develop maximum pressure on the a8-h1 diagonal. Of course, this strategic programme is in sharp conflict with the aggressive configuration of the enemy forces, which command an advantage in space, and, as a rule, White having the advantage of a tempo in development, also has a wide choice of active resources. The accumulation of all these elements, both positional and negative — determine the content, the imbalance and the sharpness of the forthcoming middlegame.

The strategically rich Paulsen system opens wide scope for creative fantasy and research work and it is unsurprising that, after the disappointment of my 'flank'

strategy. I turned my attention from my pet scheme, to which I had remained true for so long, to the study of a new theoretical formation.

Black's aim is vividly demonstrated in the following game.

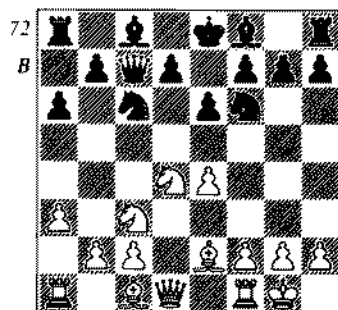
B. Abramovic-M. Taimanov
Montpellier 1986

1	e4	e5
2	♟f3	e6
3	d4	cd
4	♞xd4	♞c6
5	♞c3	a6
6	♙e2	♞c7
7	0-0	♞f6
8	a3(72)	

This prophylactic move, which is played in this variation to protect White from the intended undermining of the base of his centre with the thrust 8 ... ♙b4, does not achieve its set aims, and that is why it turns out to be an important loss of tempo. The loss of time allows Black to execute the chief idea of his plan without problems — to quickly take the a8-h1 diagonal. The main continuations for White here are 8 ♟h1 or 8 ♙e3. These are discussed later.

8	...	♞xd4!?
9	♞xd4	♙d6!?

With this cunning method Black 'steals up on' the knight on



c3, which guards the e4 pawn, from an unexpected side ...

10	♟h1	♙e5
11	♞d3	b5
12	f4	

Of course, there is no other active plan for White, but now the surrender of his position in the centre becomes unavoidable.

12	...	♙xc3
13	bc	♙b7
14	e5	

14 ♙f3 is of no help either, in view of 14 ... d5 15 e5 ♞e4 and matters for White are unenviable.

14	...	♞e4
15	c4	

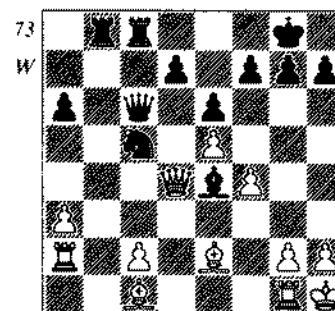
Or 15 ♙f3 ♞c5 16 ♞e2 ♞c8 with a positional advantage for Black.

15	...	bc
16	♞d4	

If 16 ♞xc4 immediately then 16 ... ♞b6! is an unpleasant reply.

16	...	0-0
17	♙xc4	♞fc8
18	♙d3	♞c5

19	♙e2	♙e4!
20	♞a2	♞c6
21	♞g1	♞ab8



One can place a full stop here.

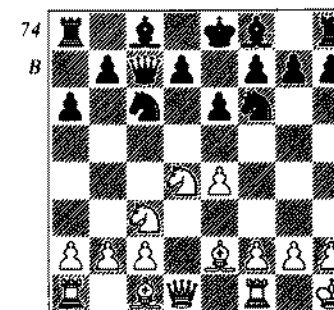
Black has achieved the maximum possible — he possesses the strategically important a8-h1 diagonal and the b- and c-files and with the dynamism of all his pieces, his advantage is in no doubt. It is interesting that such a success of opening strategy was achieved as a result of just one inaccuracy from the opponent on the eighth move. Such is the dynamic potential of this variation!

The power of the liberated bishop on the long diagonal also characterizes the next example.

Renet-Taimanov
Montpellier 1986

1	e4	c5
2	♟f3	♞c6
3	d4	cd

4	♞xd4	e6
5	♞c3	a6
6	♙e2	♞c7
7	0-0	♞f6
8	♟h1	



As in the previous game White's eighth move may be described as prophylactic. However, on this occasion it is of a more insidious nature. Since in his general plan White enters into active operations in the centre and on the kingside, here he prepares the active continuation f2-f4, which, of course, would not be possible straight away.

8	...	♙b4
---	-----	-----

In any event, consistent. Black's aim is to pressure the e4 pawn. There is also, however, a different treatment — 8 ... ♞xd4 9 ♞xd4 ♙c5 10 ♞d3 b5, whereby Black rushes to quickly mobilize his forces. However, in this case after 11 f4 ♙b7 (the flank action 11 ... h5!?) is of an experimental nature)

12 ♖f3, the positional threat of 13 e5 leads to an initiative for White.

9 ♖xc6

A well-known ploy, which gains time for the development of the planned assault in the centre.

Practice shows that no serious problems arise for Black on other continuations. For example:

(a) 9 ♖d3 0-0 (9 ... ♗e5?! 10 ♖g3) 10 f4 d6!? (10 ... d5 11 e5 ♗d7 is possible, although less convincing) 11 ♖b3 ♗d7 12 ♗d2 ♗a5 and Black has a comfortable game (Shamkovich-Matera, USA 1977).

(b) 9 ♗g5 ♖d6!? (a sharper game arises after 9 ... ♗xc3 10 ♗xf6 gf 11 bc ♗e7!? 12 ♖d2 d5 13 ♖h6 de 14 ♖xf6 ♗g6 15 f3 e5 16 ♗f5 ♗xf5 17 ♖xf5 e3, Ivanovic-Kurajica, Yugoslavia 1978) 10 ♗xc6 ♖xd1 11 ♗xd1 dc 12 e5 ♗d7 13 f4 ♗e7!? 14 ♗xe7 ♗xe7 15 ♗f3 a5 16 ♗f2 ♗c5 17 ♗e4 ♗xe4 18 ♗xe4 ♗a6 and play is equal (Pritchett-Taimanov, Decin, 1975).

9 ... bc

On 9 ... ♖xc6, there is the unpleasant reply 10 e5 and if 10 ... ♗xc3, then 11 bc ♗d5 12 ♗f3 ♖xc3 13 ♗b1 with a dangerous initiative for White.

10 f4!? 0-0!?

In his endeavour for active play White is not deterred by material

concessions. Indeed, in the event of 10 ... ♗xc3 11 bc ♗xe4 12 ♖d4 ♗f6 13 ♗a3 Black's position could become very risky. Therefore Black follows his planned course and, understanding that 'the threat is stronger than its execution', maintains the pressure on the e4 pawn, without forcing events.

Let us add that theory also examines the continuation 10 ... d5 11 e5 ♗d7, but the dynamic potential of the position is forfeited, and after 12 ♗a4 ♖b6 13 e4 play is simply in White's favour.

11 e5 ♗xc3!?

Of course, the retreat 11 ... ♗e8, often encountered in practice, may be regarded as a psychological concession. The rhythm of the attack and counterattack should not be broken.

12 bc ♗d5

13 ♗f3!?

In the fight for the initiative every tempo is important, and here White loses one. 13 ♗d3 does not promise anything either, in view of 13 ... c5 14 e4 ♖b4 15 ♗e4 ♗b7, but the active manoeuvre 13 ♗f3!? corresponds better to the spirit of the variation.

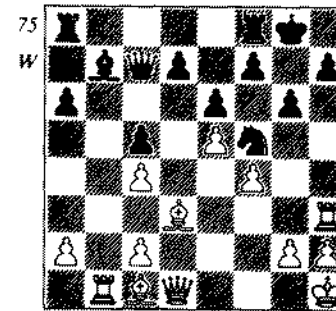
13 ... c5

14 e4 ♗e7

15 ♗b1 ♗f5

16 ♗d3 ♗b7

17 ♗h3 g6!?



It becomes clear that the outcome of the opening battle must be evaluated as favourable to Black. His pieces occupy excellent lines, and nagging pressure on the long diagonal guarantees a solid initiative. White's attack on the kingside bears an ephemeral character.

18 ♗d2 ♗ab8

19 ♗b3 d5!

As often happens in the Paulsen system, with actively configured pieces, the 'backward' d7-pawn may suddenly become an undermining force.

20 ♗xf5!?

An instructive moment.

The French Master forgets that, with opposite coloured bishops in the middlegame, the difference in their long-range abilities influences the evaluation of the position in a decisive way. As it is clear that the bishop on b7 has far more prospects than the bishop on d2, the other bishop should not be exchanged for the knight on f5.

It would be better to switch to defence by way of 20 ed ♖xd6 21 ♗f1.

20 ... ef
21 ♗bg3 f6!

This new strike at the centre deprives White of his last illusion, associated with the threat 22 ♖h5, as this thrust is now refuted by 22 ... ♖g7.

22 ef d4!

Black's positional advantage has become enormous. The rest is easy.

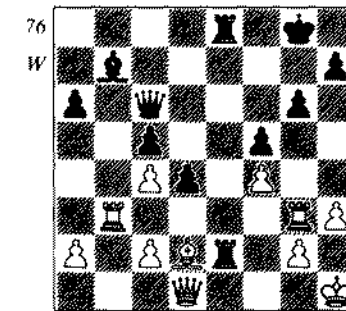
23 ♗b3 ♗xf6

24 ♖b1 ♗e6

25 ♗hg3 ♗e2

26 ♖d1 ♗be8

27 h3 ♖c6



This is what can happen on the a8-h1 diagonal!

28 ♗bf3 ♖e6

29 ♗b3 ♗c6

30 ♗h2 ♖xc4

White resigns.

The light-squared bishop played a major role in this game.

Of course, such general realizations of an opening idea rarely occur; for this it is necessary to have the 'help' of one's opponent. More commonly, confrontation with the opponent's plans results in a tough, double-edged struggle. Let's examine some characteristic examples.

Dzindzichashvili-Taimanov
Leningrad 1971

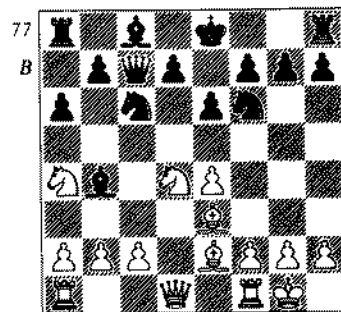
1	e4	c5
2	♟f3	e6
3	d4	cd
4	♞xd4	♞c6
5	♞c3	a6
6	♙e2	♜c7
7	0-0	♞f6
8	♙e3	

The most natural, and highly popular, continuation. Essentially, this gives the opening the most principled and problematical possibilities of the modern treatment of the Paulsen system.

8	...	♙b4
9	♞a4!?	

The seed of a clear strategic plan is contained within this tactical riposte, which reveals the shady side of Black's formation. It highlights the weakness of the b6 square and the shaky position of Black's bishop which has suddenly appeared on the b4 square with 'no business'.

There is also another possible version of the same idea — 9 ♞xc6 bc 10 ♞a4 — which is also roughly equal after 10 ... 0-0 (risky is 10 ... ♞b8 11 c4 ♙d6 12 f4 ♞xe4 13 ♙d3 ♞f6 14 c5 ♙e7 15 ♙d4), leading to the text position after a transposition of moves.



The problems that Black faces are not simple. So far as the object of the siege (the e4 pawn), is invulnerable for the moment (9 ... ♞xe4? 10 ♞xc6 ♜xc6 11 ♞b6 ♞b8 12 ♜d4 ♙f8 13 ♙f3 d5 14 c4), strict measures must be taken against the threatened clamping of the queenside by means of c2-c4 and, in many cases, the dangerous penetration of the a4 knight to b6.

9	...	0-0!?
---	-----	-------

Along with the text move, the alternative idea of 9 ... ♙e7! (analysed in the next game) is perhaps the most composed and pure reaction to the demands of the position. Renewing the threat

against the e4 pawn (the main idea remains in force!), Black gains important time for the completion of his development. On other continuations he would have to contend with a variety of difficulties. For example:

(a) 9 ... d5 10 c3! ♙e7 (10 ... ♙d6 11 ♞b6!) 11 ♞xc6 bc 12 ed cd 13 ♞b6 ♞b8 14 ♞xc8 ♜xc8 15 ♜a4+ ♜d7 16 ♜xa6 ♞xb2 17 ♞ab1 with better play for White (analysis).

(b) 9 ... b5 10 ♞xc6 dc (10 ... ♜xc6? 11 ♞b6 ♞b8 12 e5!) 11 ♙c5! ♙xc5 12 ♞xc5 0-0 13 ♜d4 e5 14 ♜c3 a5 15 ♞fd1 and White has a clear positional advantage (Suetin-Furman, USSR Ch. 1963).

(c) 9 ... ♙e7 10 c4! ♞xe4 (or 10 ... ♙d6 11 ♞f3 ♞g6 12 c5 ♙f4 13 ♜d4) 11 c5 (also good is 11 ♜c2 ♞f6 12 c5 ♙ed5 13 a3 ♙a5 14 b4 b5 15 ♞c3 ♞xe3 16 fe ♜e5 17 ♙f3!, as was played in the game Rittner-Moiseev, Corr. 1976) 11 ... ♞d5 12 ♞b3 0-0 (if 12 ... ♜c6, then 13 ♙f3!?) 13 ♜d4 f5 14 a3 ♙a5 15 ♞acl and White has strong pressure for the sacrificed pawn according to Moiseev and Ravinsky.

(d) 9 ... ♙d6 10 ♞b6! (in my own games other moves have also been tried: 10 ♞xc6 bc 11 ♞b6 ♞b8 12 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 13 ♙xa6 ♞a8 14 ♙d3 ♙xh2+ 15 ♞h1 ♙f4 16 ♜d2 ♙xe3 17 ♜xe3 ♜e5 (Koc-

Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1961); and 10 g3 b5 11 ♞b6! ♞b8 12 ♞xc8 ♞xc8 13 a4! ♞xd4 14 ♙xd4 e5 15 ♙e3 ♙c5! 16 ♙xc5 ♜xc5 17 ab ab (Suetin-Taimanov, USSR 1968); in both cases Black has an acceptable game) 10 ... ♞b8 (10 ... ♜xb6 is risky in view of 11 ♞xc6 ♜b4 12 ♞xg7+ ♞f8 13 c3 ♜xe4 14 ♜xd6+ ♞xg7 15 ♙xh6+; or 10 ... ♙xh2+ 11 ♞h1 ♜xb6 due to 12 ♞xe6 ♜xb2 13 ♞xg7+ ♞f8 14 ♞f5!) 11 g3 ♙e7 (on 11 ... ♞xe4 there is the strong 12 ♞xc6 ♜xc6 13 ♙f3) 12 ♞xc6 bc 13 ♞xc8 ♜xc8 14 e5 ♞d5 15 ♙c1 ♙c5 16 ♙d3 (16 c4!?) 16 ... a5 17 ♜g4 g6 18 c4 ♞e7 19 b3 and White's position is preferable (Sznepik-Matulovic, Helsinki 1981).

These examples show the many different strategic and tactical possibilities which are hidden in the position depicted in the diagram and which put an original 'stamp' on the Paulsen system.

10 ♞xc6

The introduction to a sequence of forcing tactical play. The gambit continuation 10 c4! also warrants consideration, although in this situation it is not as attractive as, say, after the manoeuvre 9 ... ♞c7 discussed above.

10 ... bc

10 ... dc is clearly not in the spirit of the variation. After the

continuation 11 c4! ♔d6 12 f4! ♚xe4 13 c5 ♙e7 14 ♜c2 f5 15 ♚b6 ♚b8 16 ♚ad1 (or 16 ♔d3 ♚f6 17 ♔d4) 16 ... e5, 17 b4!? guarantees White prolonged positional pressure.

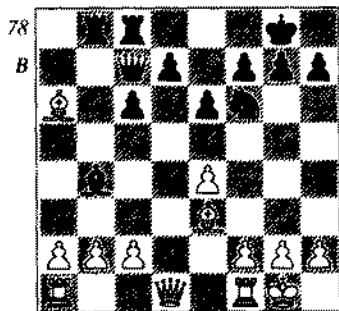
11 ♚b6

By such means White, in any event, gains the advantage of the two bishops. Also tried in this position, with less success, 11 f4 ♙e7!? 12 ♔d3 (12 e5 ♚d5 13 ♔d4 c5 14 c4 ♚xf4!) 12 ... c5 13 c4 d6 14 ♚c3 ♙b7; or 11 c4 ♙e7!? 12 ♜c2 c5 13 f4 d6 14 ♔f3 ♚b8 15 ♚ad1 ♙b7; and Black has a comfortable game in both variations.

11 ... ♚ab8
12 ♚xc8 ♚xc8

In the event of the inconsistent 12 ... ♜xc8 White has the pleasant choice between 13 e5 ♚d5 14 ♙a7!? ♚a8 15 ♔d4 c5 16 c4 and 13 ♔f4!? ♚b6 14 ♜d4 ♜b7 15 ♙e3 c5 16 ♜d3.

13 ♙xa6



One of the most critical, intricate and discussed positions in the Paulsen system, serving as a starting point for a multitude of analysis. At the present time White has an extra pawn with the advantage of an already 'prepared' passed pawn on the queenside, supported by a long-range bishop. Moreover, Black must still lose a tempo retreating his attacked rook. However, Black has his own trumps — he is better developed, the open b-file is at his disposal, and he has in reserve the tactical possibility of re-establishing material balance, as the e4 pawn is already under fire and the eventual manoeuvre ♙b4–d6 guarantees a double attack on the b2 and h2 pawns. In short, there is no simple evaluation, and the fate of the rest of the contest depends to a significant degree on the energy and dynamism exhibited by each of the two sides.

13 ... ♙e8

It has since been established that d8 is the best square for the retreat of the rook after which, as a result of an almost forced and very detailed variation, well developed in theory, there arises ... a drawn ending.

Analysis runs: 13 ... ♚d8 14 ♔d3 (14 ♔g5! is an interesting try) 14 ... ♔d6 15 ♚h1 (if 15 f4, then 15 ... e5!?) 15 ... ♙e5!? 16

c3 ♚xb2 17 ♜c1 ♚g4!? 18 f4 (18 ♜xb2?? ♙xc3!) 18 ... ♚xe3 19 ♜xb2 (19 fe?! ♜b6) 19 ... ♙xf4 20 ♜f2!? (20 ♚f3?! ♚g4) 20 ... ♚xf1 21 ♚xf1 g5!? 22 g3 ♜d6!? 23 ♙e2 (or 23 ♙c2 ♙e5 24 ♜xf7+ ♚h8) 23 ... ♙e5 24 ♜xf7+ (it is now clear why in this variation the rook should stand on d8, and not on e8!) 24 ... ♚h8 25 ♚d1 ♜c7 and, as practice has shown, despite a certain activity of the White pieces, Black has sufficient defensive resources. For example, in the game Tal–Liberzon (Skara 1980) there followed 26 ♔g4 d5!? 27 ♜xe6 ♙xc3 28 ed cd 29 ♔f3 ♜e5 30 ♜xe5+ ♙xe5 31 ♔xd5 ♚g7 and the game quickly ended peacefully. This is how far theoretical development has gone in our day!

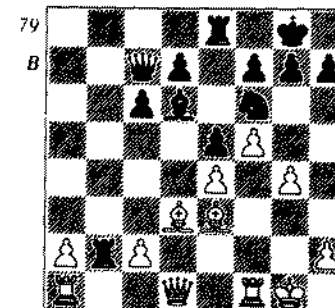
Fortunately (otherwise I would have played one attractive game less), this analysis was revealed long after my game against Dzindzichashvili, and I did not then know that the retreat of the rook to d8 was more accurate than to e8.

14 ♔d3 ♔d6
15 f4

From the loftiness of today's research, the manoeuvre 15 ♚h1 is recognized as strongest, so far as the variation given above is inadmissible for Black, and the continuation 15 ... ♚xb2 16 ♔d4 ♚b4 17 ♙xf6 g4 18 f4 promises

White a kingside initiative. But Dzindzichashvili trusted in direct plans.

15 ... e5
16 f5 ♚xb2
17 g4



The battle has assumed a 'bayonet' character. With a stable position in the centre a flank attack looks highly convincing for White. Moreover, the advance 18 g5 is threatened, winning a piece. But Black finds a resource for counterplay.

17 ... h6
18 h4 ♙f8!
19 g5 ♚d5!

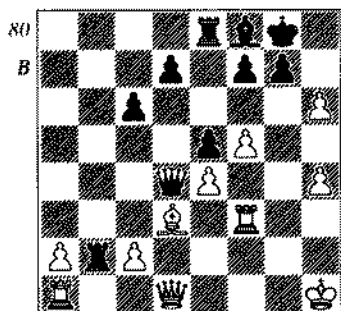
This is the whole point! The knight is immune (20 ed?! e4!), and this enables Black to gain important time for a favourable regrouping of his forces.

20 ♙c1 ♜b6+
21 ♚h1 ♚e3
22 ♙xe3 ♜xe3
23 ♚f3

Perhaps 23 ♖g4 is more energetic, so as to answer 23 ... h5 with 24 ♖g2.

23 ... ♖d4
24 gh

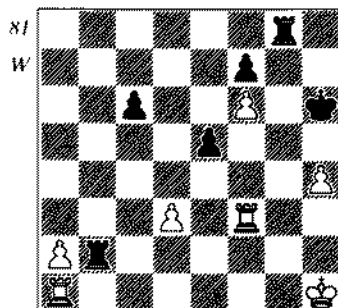
24 f6 also looks tempting, but then 24 ... d5 25 g6 ♖b7 follows, with excellent counterplay for Black.



White's position looks very menacing; his attack has taken on a concrete character. However, the typical thematic resource — a break in the centre — allows Black to seize the initiative.

24 ... d5!
25 hg de!
26 gf(♖)+ ♕xf8
27 ♙xe4 ♖xe4
28 ♖d6+ ♕g7
29 ♖d3 ♖xd3
30 f6+ ♕h6
31 cd ♖g8

As a result of stormy complications, as is often the case, an end-game arises which, although not as simple as it may appear, has



obvious drawing tendencies. However, the next phase of the game is still interesting.

32 ♖e1!? ♖g4
33 ♖xe5 ♖xh4+
34 ♕g1 ♖g4+
35 ♕f1 ♖xa2
36 ♖c5 ♖b4?!
37 ♕g1 ♖b1+
38 ♖f1 ♖bb2

Black's position appears highly promising, but alas, there remain too few pawns on the board. The next phase is clear without commentary.

39 ♖fe1 ♖g2+
40 ♕h1 ♖h2+
41 ♕g1 ♖ag2+
42 ♕f1 ♖d2
43 ♕g1 ♖hg2+
44 ♕h1 ♖g6
45 ♖xc6 ♖xd3
46 ♖6c3 ♖xc3
47 ♖xc3 ♖g5
48 ♕h2 ♕g6
49 ♖c6 ♕f5
50 ♕h3 ♖g6
51 ♖e5+ ♕xf6

Black even finally succeeds in winning a pawn, but the position is theoretically drawn. There followed:

52 ♖c6+ ♕f5
53 ♖c5+ ♕e4
54 ♖c4+ ♕d5
55 ♖f4 f6
56 ♖f1 ♕e5
57 ♖e1+ ♕f4
58 ♖f1+ ♕e3
59 ♕h4 ♕e4
60 ♖e1+ ♕f5
61 ♖f1+ ♕e6
62 ♖e1+ ♕f7
63 ♖e3 ♖g1
64 ♖g3

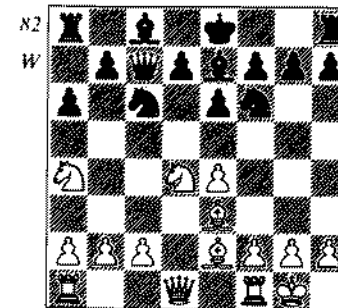
Drawn.

A fascinating contest in all stages!

Here is one more example in that same tense character, but played comparatively recently and therefore reflecting the modern treatment of this variation.

Zapata-Taimanov
Titograd 1984

1 e4 c5
2 ♖f3 e6
3 d4 cd
4 ♖xd4 ♖c6
5 ♖c3 a6
6 ♙e2 ♖c7
7 0-0 ♖f6
8 ♙e3 ♙b4
9 ♖a4!? ♙e7



In the light of the previous game from this opening *tabiya* it is easy to understand the sense of such a retreat. Above all the bishop's function on b4 was to attack the knight on c3 to increase pressure on the e4 pawn so, having driven off the knight, the bishop has 'no further business' on b4. Moreover, its position on b4 has become 'uncomfortable', as it not only secures the safety of the e4 pawn (9 ... ♖xe4? 10 ♖xc6 bc 11 ♖d4), but can also turn out to be in danger after White's planned advance c2-c4-c5. Finally, with the exchange on c6 (10 ♖xc6 bc), the bishop on b4 will block the eventual activity of the Black artillery along the b-file as in the previously examined variations. In short, Black has sufficient motives for the withdrawal of the bishop, even with tempo (10 ... ♖xe4! is now threatened).

10 ♖xc6

Perhaps this is the only way to fight for the initiative — it would be inadvisable to lose time in defending the e4 pawn.

10 ... bc
11 ♖b6

On 11 ♖b6, which was once tested by Geller, Black achieves a comfortable game by means of 11 ... ♗f4!?

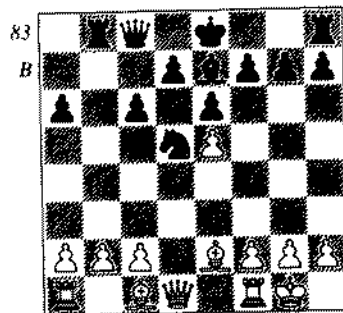
11 ... ♗b8
12 ♖xc8 ♗xc8

In the event of 12 ... ♗xc8?! 13 ♖xa6 ♗b8 Black regains the pawn but, after 14 ♖d3 ♗xb2 15 ♖d4 ♗b8 16 e5 ♖d5 17 c4 ♖b4 18 ♖e4 c5 19 ♖c3 ♖c6 20 f4 ♖d4 21 a4!?, loses the initiative completely (Beliavsky–Damjanovic, Alicante 1978). It is important not to lose the momentum of counterplay in this variation!

13 e5 ♖d5
14 ♖c1

It is tempting to move the bishop to a more active square, but in the event of 14 ♖d4 there is the possibility of 14 ... c5 15 c4 cd 16 cd ♗c5! 17 ♖f3 ♖g5 and White must give up hopes for the initiative.

This position, which is often encountered in tournament practice, may freely be included in the discussion of opening 'tabiya'. It is not easy to assess. At first glance, the outcome of the opening can only be satisfactory for Black —



he is close to harmoniously completing his development, and his pieces occupy convenient positions, which provide the basis for counting on a queenside initiative. But defects may also be spotted in Black's formation — the weakness of his pawn formation and the insecure position of his most active piece — the knight on d5. Along with this, White, although backward in development, has a very flexible pawn chain, and the presence of the two bishops and eventual pressure along the d-file promise active prospects. In short, although Black's dynamic possibilities permit him hopes of counterplay, the 'long term' factors are in White's favour.

14 ... ♖c5

Alas, a dear tempo must be lost in order to guarantee the knight a convenient retreat. In the event of 14 ... c5 15 ♗e1 0-0 16 ♖f3! ♖b4 17 ♖f4 ♖c6 18 ♗b1 ♗b4 19 ♖e4 it is not easy for Black to

harmoniously adjust the coordination of his pieces (Thipsay–Taimanov, New Delhi, 1982).

15 c4

Perhaps this is the only way for White to fight for the initiative, since the tempting looking 15 ♗d3 turns out to be 'a stab into thin air'. In the game Tukmakov–Taimanov (Vilnius 1975) there followed 15 ... 0-0! 16 ♗g3 (if 16 ♗xa6, then 16 ... ♗xa6 17 ♖xa6 ♖b4! 18 ♖d3 ♖xd3 19 cd ♖d4 and White cannot count on anything in particular either) 16 ... ♖e7!? 17 ♖d3 ♗c7 18 b3 (18 ♖xa6?! ♖d4) 18 ... a5!? (18 ... ♖d4?? 19 ♗h4) 19 ♖e3 (19 ♖b2?! a4) 19 ... ♖xe3 20 ♗xe3 ♖d5 21 ♗g3 f6!? 22 ♗fe1 ♖b4 and Black seizes the initiative.

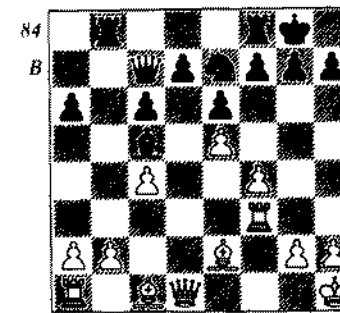
15 ... ♖e7
16 ♖h1

Zapata places his hopes on active kingside operations, for which he 'animates' his f2 pawn. Also tried in practice is the more conservative plan — 16 b3 ♗c7 17 ♖b2 — on which both 17 ... d6 18 ed ♖xd6, and 17 ... a5!? are possible.

16 ... ♗c7
17 f4 0-0
18 ♗f3(84)
18 ... f6!?

An instructive moment.

Black has better development, on the basis of which he enters



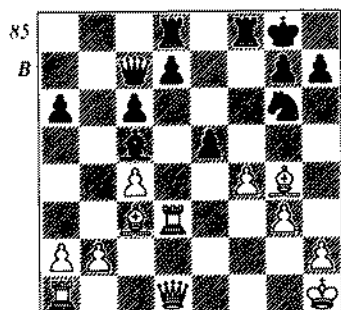
into a confrontation, although this is associated with the opening up of play and may activate the hostile pieces. As is by now well known, dynamism is the chief factor of Black's strategy in the Paulsen variation!

19 ♗d3!? ♗bd8
20 ef ♗xf6
21 ♖d2!?

Zapata treats this double-edged contest very carefully. The stereotyped 21 b3 would be a mistake in view of 21 ... e5!

21 ... ♖g6
22 g3 e5!?
23 ♖c3 ♗ff8
24 ♖g4!?

White's trump is his two bishops, and Zapata uses them in full measure to create counterplay. White's position would become dangerous in the event of 24 fe ♖xe5. Now, on 24 ... ef there would follow 25 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 26 ♗xd7 ♗xd7 27 ♖xd7 with a clear advantage to White.



24 ... d5!
Only onward! Delay may mean 'death' here.

25 cd ef
26 dc ♖xc6+

Of course not 26 ... fg in view of 27 ♜xd8 ♜xd8 28 ♜b3+ ♔h8 29 ♜b7.

27 ♔f3 ♜c7
28 ♜xd8 ♜xd8
29 ♜a4 fg
30 ♜xa6

The position is intensified to the limit. Despite all the laws, Black demolishes the enemy kingside, and White — the queenside. Who has the better chances?

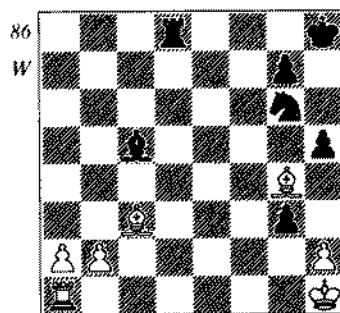
30 ... ♜f4!?

There is no time for the move 30 ... gh. On this there would follow 31 ♜b7! with great force. Now the manoeuvre 31 ♜b7 would be answered by the stern riposte 31 ... ♜h6!

31 ♜e6+!? ♔h8
32 ♜g4

It seems as though the scales are beginning to incline towards White. The kingside attack has been beaten off, and his passed pawns must tell weightily in the endgame. But Black's tactical resources are far from exhausted.

32 ... ♜xg4
33 ♔xg4 h5!



An unexpected surprise! The techniques of deflection and double attack allow Black to maintain the initiative at the critical moment.

34 ♜d1!?

A clever counter-riposte. It is interesting that White's bishop cannot find a single convenient square. On the squares h5, f5, e6, e2 it falls after 34 ... g2+ with the subsequent double attack by the knight from the squares h4 or f4; on 34 ♔f3 comes the unpleasant reply 34 ... ♔h4 and after 34 ♔h3 — 34 ... ♔f4.

34 ... ♜f8
35 ♔d7

A retreat square has been won, but as Black's answer shows, there is still no peace for White.

35 ... h4
36 hg hg
37 ♔g2

The threat of 37 ... ♜f2 has to be met.

37 ... ♔f4+

The last assault, which forces ... a draw.

38 ♔xg3 ♔e2+
39 ♔g4 ♜f4+
40 ♔g5 ♔e7+
41 ♔g6 ♔xc3
42 ♜h1+ ♜h4
43 ♜xh4+ ♔xh4
44 bc ♔g8

Drawn.

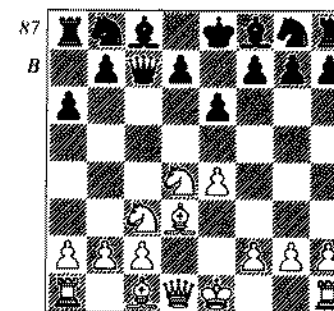
A dynamic contest, where attack and counterattack were equally successful.

And so, the initial plan of piece pressure on the enemy centre remains relevant after all these years. Before we draw to a conclusion, we must examine one more variation on the present theme, in which Black's idea is opposed by a different deployment of the White pieces.

Krogius-Taimanov
USSR Ch. 1959

1 e4 c5
2 ♔f3 e6

3 d4 cd
4 ♔xd4 a6
5 ♔c3 ♜c7
6 ♔d3



Up till now we have largely concentrated on examples where White has developed his bishop on e2. With Black's chosen order of moves in this variation (delaying the mobilization of his knight from b8) White has a tempting alternative — he obtains a new set-up by playing his bishop to d3. Above all, it solidly supports the e4 pawn, invariably an object of concern; besides which it leaves the d1-h5 diagonal free for the possible transfer of the queen to the kingside; and the e-file open, where the white rook may be actively placed. True, the bishop on d3 falls into the black knight's zone of operations (through the manoeuvre ♔b8-c6-e5 or ♔b8-c6-b4), which makes it vulnerable, and blocks the d-file, where White

frequently creates pressure with his heavy pieces in this variation. In short, the character of play changes significantly in this variation.

6 ... ♖c6
7 ♗e3

On 7 ♖xc6 play leads to constructions already examined by the reader after 7 ... ♗xc6, though 7 ... dc 8 a4 e5!? is also perfectly viable for Black.

7 ... ♖f6
8 0-0

The most natural plan of development, although the idea of preparing queenside castling, by way of 8 ♗e2, has also been encountered. In one of my games against Gipslis (USSR 1959) there then followed 8 ... ♗d6!? 9 0-0-0 (if 9 g3 then 9 ... ♗e5!?) 9 ... ♗e5 10 ♖xc6 bc 11 ♖a4 ♚b8 12 g3 ♚b4!? and the Black pieces have activity.

8 ... ♗e5!?

An unusual manoeuvre. Hereby Black hastens to transfer the knight to the attractive outpost on c4 with tempo (9 ... ♖eg4 is threatened), on top of which depriving his opponent of certain favourable plans, connected with the exchange of the knight on c6. The interesting manoeuvre 8 ... ♗d6 also serves as a tempting alternative (note, incidentally, that the continuation 8 ... ♖xd4 9 ♗xd4 ♗c5 is risky in view of 10

♗xf6 gf 11 ♗g4, and on 8 ... b5 9 ♖xc6 ♗xc6 a position arises that was examined earlier). Here are a few practical examples of 8 ... ♗d6.

(a) 9 h3 ♗f4!? 10 ♗d2 ♗xe3 11 ♗xe3 d6 (if 11 ... ♗b6, then 12 ♖f5 ♗xe3 13 ♖xe3 b5 14 ♚fb1!? b4 15 ♖a4 ♖e7 16 a3!? with an advantage to White as in Radulov-Andersson, Hastings 1972/73) 12 ♖b3 0-0 13 f4 b5 14 ♗g3 ♗b7 with approximately level play (A. Zaitsev-Suetin, USSR 1970).

(b) 9 ♖h1 ♗f4 (the sharp 9 ... h5!? 10 ♖xc6 bc 11 f4 ♖g4 12 ♗f3 ♖xe3 13 ♗xe3 e5 is also interesting, as was played in the game Nezhmetdinov-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1959) 10 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 11 ♖ce2 (or 11 ♖de2 ♗h4 12 h3 d6 13 f4 0-0) 11 ... ♗h6 12 h3 0-0 13 ♖xc6 bc 14 f4 c5!? 15 c4 ♗b7 16 ♖g3 d6 17 ♖h2 ♚ad8 and Black has a comfortable game (Tal-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1959).

9 h3 b5

The most consistent continuation — the outpost on c4 is prepared for the knight. 9 ... ♗c5 has also been tried but it is not, perhaps, in the spirit of the variation: 10 ♖a4 ♗a7 11 c4 leads to a constrained game for Black.

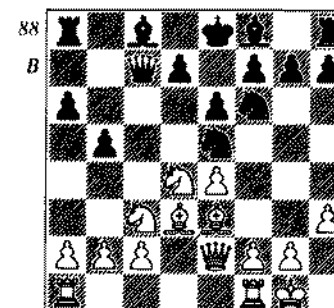
10 ♗e2

With this move White renders harmless the occupation of c4, but loses a tempo in the dynamic

dispute. Perhaps the immediate 10 f4 is better motivated here, although this also involves certain positional concessions. For example, 10 ... ♖c4 11 ♗xc4 ♗xc4 12 ♗d3 (if 12 e5, then 12 ... ♖d5 13 ♖xd5 ♗xd5 14 ♗e2 ♗b7 and, despite a certain lack of development, Black achieves his intended goal — supremacy of the a8-h1 diagonal. Nevertheless, it is in precisely this line that White must search for a path towards the initiative) 12 ... d5 (on 12 ... ♗b7 13 a4! ♗xd3 14 cd b4 15 ♖ce2 ♗c5 16 ♖f2 Black has significant problems in the endgame) 13 e5 (Shaposhnikov tried the continuation 13 ed against me here in 1960, however, after 13 ... ♗xd3 14 cd b4!? 15 ♖e4 ♖xd5 16 ♗d2 f5 17 ♖g5 ♗c5 18 ♖f3 ♗d7 19 ♚ac1 ♚c8 20 ♖h2 0-0, no advantage was gained) 13 ... ♖d7 14 ♗xc4 dc 15 f5!? (only in this way can one fight for the initiative!) 15 ... ♖xe5 16 fe ♗xe6 17 ♚ae1 ♖d7!? 18 ♖xe6 fe 19 ♗d4 0-0-0 20 ♚xe6 ♖c5! 21 ♚c6+ ♖b7 22 ♚xc5 ♚xd4 23 ♚cf5 ♗d6 24 ♚f7+ ♖c6 25 ♚xg7 b4 and Black has active play for the sacrificed pawn (Fischer-Petrosian, Santa Monica 1966). This classic example serves as a major argument in support of Black's plan.

10 ... b4

Only onwards! The struggle for



influence in the centre is the underlying theme of the entire variation.

11 ♖d1

On 11 ♖b1 d5 12 ♖d2 de 13 ♖xe4 ♖d5!?, Black has completely equal chances, and the knight 'square' in the centre is simply a picture! (Dückstein-Taimanov, Copenhagen 1965).

11 ... d5!?

The aim has been achieved — the pride of White's position, the e4 pawn, is exchanged.

12 ♗f4 ♗d6

13 ♗xe5

This is, of course, a concession, but now it is forced. 13 ed ♖xd5 14 ♗b5+ promises nothing either, in view of 14 ... ♖f8.

13 ... ♗xe5

14 ♖f3 ♗f4

15 ed

On 15 g3?!, good for Black is 15 ... de 16 ♗xe4 ♖xe4 17 ♗xe4 ♗b7 18 ♗xf4 ♗xf4 19 gf ♗xf3.

15 ... ♖xd5

16 ♖e3

Having clearly failed in the strategic dispute, Krogius endeavours to switch the struggle into tactical channels. However, nothing else remains for White.

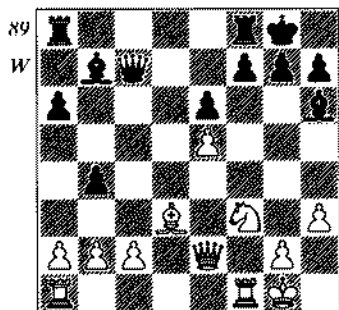
16 ... ♖xe3!?

A tempo is a small price for the sake of retaining the bishop pair.

17 fe ♕h6

18 e4 0-0

19 e5 ♕b7



Black's achievement is evident. His bishops rake the major highways, the c- and d-files promise activity for the heavy pieces and his pawn configuration is harmonious. It remains only to display vigilance for any possible kingside action by his opponent.

20 ♖a1 ♖a5

20 ... ♗b6+ 21 ♔h1 ♖ad8 may be more accurate.

21 ♖h2 ♖ad8

22 h4

This move looks very energetic (the threat 23 ♖g4 is highly dangerous!) but in fact it turns out to

be an irreparable loss of tempo. 22 ♖g4 ♕g5 23 ♗f2 would have been better, supporting pressure on the flank.

22 ... ♖d4!

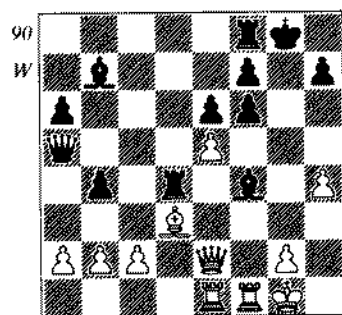
23 ♖g4 ♕f4

Having blocked up the approach to his king and created the concrete threat of 24 ... ♕g3, Black secures the advantages of his position by decisive means. This situation nudges his opponent into a despairing check.

24 ♖f6+

Realizing that on the natural development of events (24 ♗f2 ♗d5), Black's initiative will inevitably grow, Krogius tries a last drastic remedy.

24 ... gf



25 ♕xh7+

This repeat sacrifice finds an elegant refutation. But White's attack comes to a dead end on other attempts also. For example:

(a) 25 ♗h5 f5! 26 ♖x4 ♖fd8 27 ♗g5+ ♔f8;

(b) 25 ♗g4+ ♔h8 26 ♖xf4 ♖g8 27 ♖xd4 ♖xg4 28 ♖xg4 b3!;

(c) 25 ♖xf4 ♖xf4 26 ♗h5 ♖f5! 27 ♕xf5 ef 28 ef ♗b6+ and 29 ... ♗xf6.

A fascinating set of variations!

25 ... ♔xh7

26 ♗h5+ ♔g8

27 ♗g4+ ♕g5!

My opponent had clearly underestimated this crafty manoeuvre when planning his counterattack. The denouement now arrives swiftly.

28 ♗xd4 ♖d8!

29 ♗g4

Other moves do not help either — on 29 ♗a7, 29 ... ♗d5 decides, and on 29 ♗f2 — 29 ... ♖d2.

29 ... ♗c5+

30 ♖f2 ♖d4

31 ♗g3 ♖xh4

32 ef ♖f4!

The concluding stroke. White's position is beyond salvation.

33 ♖d1 ♖xf6

34 ♖d8+ ♔g7

35 ♖b8 ♖xf2

White resigns (36 ♗xf2 ♕e3).

Black's bishops, having broken through the enemy's centre, are prepared for glory!

With this game I shall, with gratitude to my loyal friend, the Paulsen system, conclude analysis of the variations of this rich and fascinating opening scheme. It served me true and well for more than a decade and even then, it was on its 'prompting', and based on the foundation of its ideas, that I developed my own original variation and changed over to my 'patent' system. At times I recall 'the old faithful' and get the desire again and again to test its rich, creative and dynamic potential ...

5 The Taimanov System

According to My Own Formula
 In the process of many years of understanding the versatile strategy of the Paulsen system, developing a grasp of its complex ideas and mastery of its wide arsenal of inherent tactical methods, there often arose in me the wish to depart from the well-trodden paths in the search for original creative variations. Moreover, my opponents were from time to time able to devise new problems in the traditional *tabiyas*, forcing me to critically revise assessments of these or other favourite positions. So, by way of illustration, delay in development of the kingside sometimes made itself felt and at times 'inconvenience' created by the threat of the advance of the pawn with tempo from e4 to e5, expanding the active possibilities of the powerful position of the white knight on d4. In short, the shady side of the Paulsen system demands a constant polishing of

the many possibilities and improvements of its formation, and then also a modernization of the treatment. So, in analytical work one day there was born the idea to refrain from the conventional early development of the queen, but instead to develop the king's knight not on the square f6, where it is subject to the threat of attack, but to the more intricate and flexible e7 square. This innovation turned out to be highly significant and enriched the traditional opening scheme with original strategic content.

In the process of practical tests and theoretical research the new idea found its adherents, gradually gaining in prestige and popularity and finally, having detached itself from the Paulsen system, it became an independent and highly diversified opening scheme, known to theory as the 'Taimanov system'.

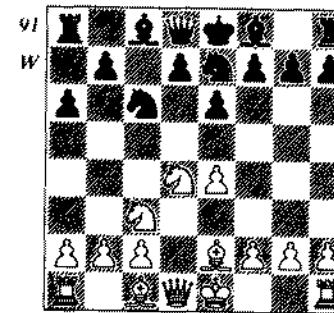
It arises after the introductory

moves (which are, incidentally, played in different sequences).

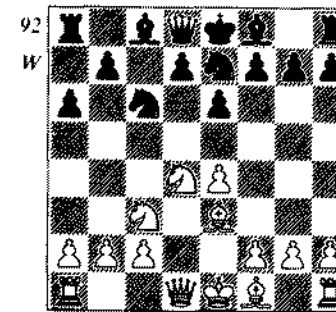
- | | | |
|---|------|-----|
| 1 | e4 | c5 |
| 2 | ♘f3 | e6 |
| 3 | d4 | cd |
| 4 | ♙xd4 | ♘c6 |
| 5 | ♘c3 | a6 |

And now to the various modifications

- | | | |
|---|-----|-------|
| 6 | ♙e2 | ♘ge7; |
|---|-----|-------|

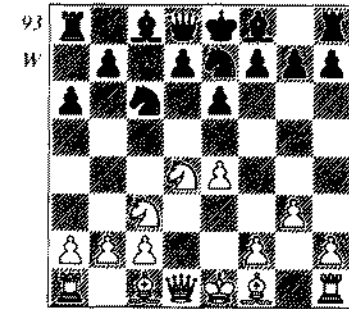


- | | | |
|---|-----|-------|
| 6 | ♙e3 | ♘ge7; |
|---|-----|-------|



- | | | |
|---|----|-------|
| 6 | g3 | ♘ge7. |
|---|----|-------|

Black's basic opening plan in all of the initial positions of the



Taimanov system lies in the idea of removing active White pieces from the d4 outpost, which is achieved by an exchange of the knight in the centre and the subsequent 'tempo' transfer of the 'knight understudy' to c6. If this goal, which usually guarantees comfortable and speedy development, turns out to be unpractical (White usually avoids the exchange, voluntarily retreating his knight from the centre to the flank), then the original prospects of a 'tour' arise for Black's kingside knight either as defender (♘e7-c8 and ♘e7-g6-f8) or as an attacker (♘e7-c6-a5-c4 or ♘e7-g6-e5).

The development of the knight on e7 also has a positive side, which depreciates one of White's active resources — the pawn assault e4-e5, which is typical and dangerous in many forms of the Sicilian Defence where the black knight is positioned on the f6 square. In the current variation the

f6 square may often be favourably used for the activation of the dark-squared bishop (♗f8-e7-f6!).

Along with this, it is impossible not to notice the dark side of Black's idea. In the first place, it involves an infringement (even if only temporary!) of the classical configuration of the kingside forces, hindering harmonious development. Also essential is Black's renunciation of pressure against the e4 pawn, depriving himself of the important Sicilian motif of counterplay in the centre.

But with regard to the correlation of the negative and positive sides of the system in question, based on objective and practical considerations, one cannot draw straightforward conclusions regarding its correctness and dynamism, which is one reason why the Taimanov system is so topical and popular.

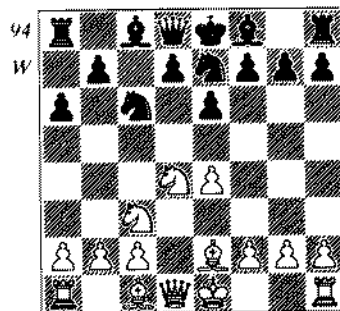
Variations on a Familiar Theme

The following contest vividly displays the basic strategic motifs of the struggle in this scheme:

Unzicker-Taimanov Wijk aan Zee 1980

1	e4	c5
2	♗f3	♗c6
3	d4	cd

4	♗xd4	e6
5	♗c3	a6
6	♗e2	♗ge7



7 ♗e3

One of the most solid and reliable continuations in the Taimanov system, the main idea of which is to guarantee a convenient retreat for the queen (the squares b6 or d2), in the event of a routine exchange in the centre.

7 ... ♗xd4

7 ... b5 is also encountered and only after 8 0-0 — 8 ... ♗xd4. This usually leads to a harmless transposition of moves, but the immediate exchange is nevertheless advisable in practice, in so far as it limits the opponent's options — in particular, excluding the variation associated with the manoeuvre 8 ♗b3.

8 ♗xd4

Of course, 8 ♗xd4 makes no sense. After 8 ... ♗c6 9 ♗e3 (don't give up the bishop!) 9 ... b5 10

♗d2 ♗e7 White loses a tempo in comparison with the main variation.

8 ... b5

An important subtlety. More than keeping the queen away, Black increases his share of the queenside. On the immediate 8 ... ♗c6?! there could follow 9 ♗b6!? with a plan of blockade.

9 0-0

The most advisable plan. Other continuations which have been encountered in practice are either weaker or lead to the main variation by a transposition of moves. For example:

(a) 9 ♗b6 (this exchange is harmless for Black here) 9 ... ♗xb6 10 ♗xb6 ♗b7 11 f3 ♗c8 12 0-0-0 ♗g6 13 ♗d4 f6 14 h4 ♗e7 15 g3 ♗e5, and Black has full equality (Bellon-Lopez, Wijk aan Zee 1977);

(b) 9 a3 ♗c6 10 ♗d2 ♗e7 11 0-0 0-0 12 ♗ad1 d6 13 ♗f4 ♗e5, with roughly level chances (Arulaid-Taimanov, USSR 1974);

(c) 9 0-0-0 ♗c6 10 ♗d2 (or 10 ♗b6 ♗e7 11 ♗xd8+ ♗xd8 12 f4 ♗b7 13 ♗f3 ♗c8) 10 ... ♗b4!? 11 a3 ♗e7 and, in connection with the positional threat of 12 ... b4, Black has excellent prospects on the queenside;

(d) 9 f4 ♗c6 10 ♗d2 ♗e7 11 0-0-0?! (11 0-0 is better, reverting to the main variation) 11 ... ♗a5!

12 e5 (or 12 a3 b4) 12 ... b4 13 ♗e4 ♗xa2 14 ♗d6+ ♗xd6 15 ♗xd6 ♗a1+ 16 ♗d2 ♗xb2. White does not have sufficient compensation for his material deficit (Martin-Taimanov, Montila 1977);

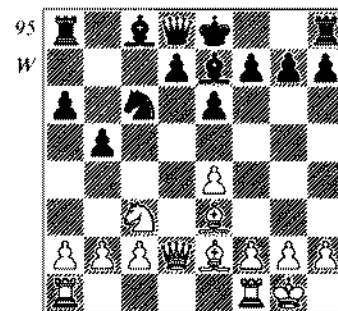
(e) 9 ♗d1 ♗b7 10 0-0 ♗c6 11 ♗d2 ♗e7 12 f4 (or 12 ♗f4), and by an insignificant transposition of moves, play enters into the channels of the main variation.

9 ... ♗c6

10 ♗d2

Here, as in the preceding examples, the idea behind the move 7 ♗e3 becomes clear. Retreating, the queen does not obstruct the path of its dark-squared bishop.

10 ... ♗e7



On the board is one of the typical *tabiya* of the Taimanov system, providing the opening with a multitude of possibilities leading to a rich middlegame. The

general assessment of the position according to objective criteria undoubtedly lies in White's favour: he has almost completed his development, has an advantage in the centre, pressure on the d-file and quite a broad choice of plans in the fight for the initiative. Black is somewhat cramped (in the centre at least) and must still spend a few tempi on the mobilization of his forces. It would seem that the outcome of the opening is lamentable for Black. Nevertheless, practice fully testifies to the viability of this variation! Where does the secret lie? For this one must investigate carefully and without bias. Above all, Black's construction is invulnerable for the moment, for his pieces control the entire zone of defence and it is not easy to get into this fortification (concern may only be felt over the weak d6 square). Besides which, he has everything prepared for the harmonious completion of his development, and if, after castling, he succeeds in positioning his pieces on the queenside according to the scheme ♖c7, ♜d8, ♙b7, ♞ac8, then, on account of his active resource — ♚c6–a5–c4 — he can count on promising queenside counterplay, along with activity on the a8–h1 diagonal. That is why there has been a prolonged theoretical dispute around this

variation for a few decades already (!), deepening the understanding of the concealed nuances of the position, but by no means pronouncing a conclusive verdict.

11 f4

One of the most natural ways to fight for the initiative — White widens his sphere of influence in the centre, which opens prospects for the activation of his forces.

An approximately equally attractive alternative is the idea of piece pressure on the d6 point by the means of 11 ♞ad1 0-0 (speedy counterplay with 11 ... ♙b7 12 ♙f4 ♞c8 13 ♞fe1 ♚a5 is also worth consideration) 12 ♙f4. but Black also has his counterchances in this case after 12 ... ♗a5!? (12 ... f6 is worse because of 13 ♙d6 ♙xd6 14 ♗xd6. Hjartarson–Taimanov, Leningrad 1984) 13 a3 b4!? 14 ab ♗xb4.

11 ... ♙b7

11 ... d6 12 ♞ad1 ♗c7 is less advisable. The delay in castling may be exploited by White via 13 f5! ♚e5 14 fe ♙xe6 15 ♚d5. Conversely, 11 ... 0-0 is quite possible, which after 12 ♞ad1 d6 13 ♙d3 ♙b7 leads to the normal development of events.

12 e5

A double-edged idea. Unzicker unequivocally fixes the backward d7 pawn, counting on restricting it with pressure from his heavy

pieces. However, this significantly weakens the h1–a8 diagonal which, as is well known, is fraught with danger in the Sicilian Defence. However, less committal, 'solid' continuations do not promise White any particular advantage either. For example:

(a) 12 ♙d3 0-0 13 ♗f2 ♞c8 14 ♞ad1 ♚a5! 15 ♚h1 (if 15 ♙b6, then both 15 ... ♗xb6 16 ♗xb6 ♙c5+ 17 ♗xc5 ♞xc5 and 15 ... ♗e8!? are possible, in both cases with a comfortable game for Black) 15 ... ♚c4 16 ♙c1 ♞c7 17 a4 b4 18 ♚e2 ♗a8!? 19 ♚g3 ♙h4, and Black obtains a completely equal position (Velimirovic–Taimanov, Titograd 1984);

(b) 12 ♞ad1 ♞c8!? 13 ♙f3 ♚a5 14 ♙d4 ♚c4 15 ♗c1 0-0 16 e5 ♗c7, and the chances are roughly level for either side (Prandstetter–Romanishin, Taxco 1985).

12 ... ♚a5!?

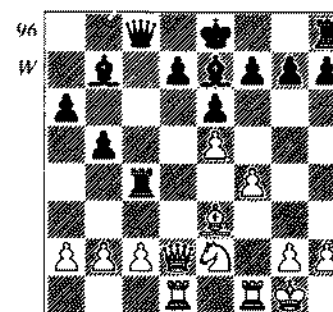
Black brings his trump into play straight away — activating his long-range bishop and repelling the threat of 13 ♚e4), whilst the knight hastens to the c4 outpost according to its predestined tour.

13 ♙d3(!?)

Essentially a loss of time, always dangerous in double-edged play. Since the light-squared bishop must be exchanged for the black knight sooner or later, it would be better, without losing a tempo,

to continue development via 13 ♞ad1. In this case after 13 ... ♞c8 14 ♞f2 ♚c4 15 ♙xc4 ♞xc4 16 ♗e1, with a subsequent ♞fd2 White would still maintain the balance.

13	...	♞c8
14	♚e2	♚c4
15	♙xc4	♞xc4
16	♞ad1	♗c8



If this position is compared to that in the previous diagram, one's attention is arrested by the striking metamorphosis — in a short time the black pieces have acquired exceptional dynamism. His light-squared bishop, after the elimination of its 'opponent', has become 'lord' of the position, and the 'heavy artillery' exerts pressure on the c-file. White though, besides slight pressure on the d7 pawn, has nothing to show for this activity.

17 c3

Again a superficial decision. A well-known strategic rule goes:

'One should not weaken the pawn structure at the part of the board where one's opponent is stronger'. 17 ♖d4 was better, intending counterplay by way of f4-f5.

17 ... ♗b4!

And this is the retribution! The threat of 18 ... bc 19 ♗xc3 ♗b4! forces White to switch completely to the defensive.

18 ♖c1 0-0!

Exactly at the right moment! Having successfully carried out his intended queenside action, Black is now able to give consideration to his own king. Fresh reserves enter the battle.

19 b3 bc

20 ♗xc3 ♖c6

21 ♗a4 ♗a3!?

22 ♖xc6 ♗xc6

23 ♗b6 d6!?

A new achievement. Thanks to the operation of his powerful diagonal 'tandem', Black is able to get rid of the only weakness in his camp — the d7 pawn. The point is that on his opponent's prepared manoeuvre 24 ♗c4, there is the effective riposte 24 ... ♗b4!

24 ed ♗xd6

25 ♖c1 ♗e4

26 ♖c4 ♗b1+

27 ♖c1 ♗g6!?

28 ♗c2 ♗e4

29 ♗f2 ♖d8!?

The placement of Black's pieces is excellent, however, in order to

loosen White's presently solid position, extra force is necessary. It is important to either activate his rook on the d-file (which contains the threat of 30 ... ♗a3), or secure the exchange of rooks, which would open possibilities for the black queen to invade the enemy camp along the back rank.

30 ♖d1

Unzicker, as a lesser of the evils, opts for the exchange, placing his hopes on simplifications, but would consolidation via 30 ♗c4 have been more promising?

30 ... ♗c7

31 ♖xd8+ ♗xd8

32 ♗c4 ♗d5!?

Black's advantage is obvious — the light-squared diagonals a8-h1 and h7-b1 are completely in his control, and the interaction of his queen and bishop on the g2 square open up attacking chances. Above all 33 ... ♗b1+ is threatened.

33 ♗d2

On 33 h3 there is the very strong 33 ... ♗h4!

33 ... h6

34 h3 a5!?

Due to the complete absence of any counterplay from his opponent, Black is able to unhurriedly improve his position ...

35 ♗f3 ♗c7

36 ♗d4

On 36 ♗e5 there would follow 36 ... ♗e4 with the threat of 37

... g5. This motif is significant here.

36 ... ♗b1+

37 ♗h2 g5!

Going over to decisive operations. The diagonal attack is highly instructive.

38 ♗b5

There is nothing better.

38 ... ♗xf4+

39 ♗xf4 gf

40 ♗c3

Of course, the continuation 40 ♗xf4 ♗xa2 is hopeless for White.

40 ... ♗f5

41 ♗xd5 ed

42 ♗d4

White finally succeeds in ridding himself of the terrible enemy bishops, but the resulting queen endgame, alas, is also dismal.

42 ... ♗e4

43 ♗f6 d4!

As is well known, in queen endings the quantity of pawns is not so important as their quality!

44 ♗xh6 ♗e5!

Ambush!

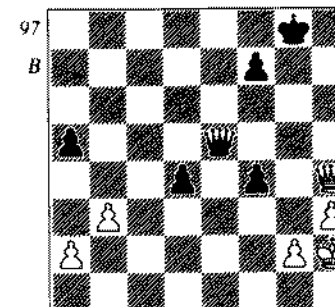
45 ♗h4(97)

45 ... d3!

It is important to be attentive even in seemingly easily-won positions. The tempting 45 ... f3+ could suddenly lead to a loss after 46 ♗g3+! By sacrificing the passed pawn, Black forces victory.

46 ♗d8+ ♗g7

47 ♗xd3



White now has an extra pawn, but ...

47 ... f3+

48 ♗g1

48 g3 is unsuitable due to 48 ... ♗e2+.

48 ... ♗e1+

49 ♗h2

Or 49 ♗f1 f2+.

49 ... f2

The pawn is immune. It only remains now for the king to escape from the checks. For this a tour to the a1 square is necessary!

50 ♗g3+ ♗f8

51 ♗b8+ ♗e7

52 ♗c7+ ♗e6

53 ♗c4+ ♗e5

White resigned.

Unzicker decides not to test the 'resilience' of the black king any further, therefore accepting defeat.

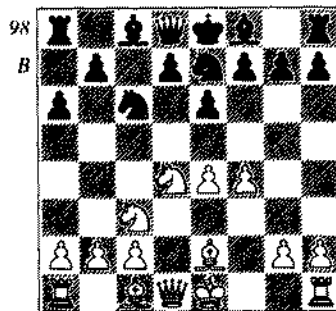
The 'stock' plan succeeded in full measure in this game — the mechanism of ousting the white pieces from the centre, the thematic knight's tour — ♗g8-e7-

c6-a5-c4, the power of the light-squared bishop on the long diagonal and, finally, the dynamism of the b-pawn, all clicked together in the 'battering' of the enemy queenside. It is true that Black's success was to a large extent due to the sluggish strategic line adopted by Unzicker, who was unable to exploit the advantage which lay in White's opening formation.

We shall now examine a contest where these trumps were realized more skilfully.

Believsky-Taimanov
Moscow 1979

- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 1 | e4 | c5 |
| 2 | ♟f3 | ♞c6 |
| 3 | d4 | cd |
| 4 | ♞xd4 | e6 |
| 5 | ♞c3 | a6 |
| 6 | ♞e2 | ♞ge7 |
| 7 | f4 | |



The motif of this variation is akin to the one examined above, but expressed in a more energetic form. White increases his influence in the centre and, incidentally, frees the f2 square for a convenient retreat for the queen in the event of Black exchanging in the centre.

7 ... b5

Such a flexible method of development is more advisable than the direct 7 ... ♞xd4 8 ♞xd4 ♞c6 9 ♞f2 b5. After 10 ♞e3 ♞b7 11 ♞b6!? (11 0-0 ♞e7 12 ♞ad1 0-0 13 ♞f3 is also good) 11 ... ♞c8 12 ♞d1 ♞e7 13 0-0 it is difficult for Black to repair the harmonious coordination of his forces (Vilela-Lobredo, Havana 1984).

8 0-0

Other attempts at fighting for the initiative are less convincing. For example:

(a) 8 ♞f3 ♞c7 9 e5 ♞b7 10 ♞e4 ♞g6 11 g3 (otherwise 11 ... ♞h4) 11 ... ♞d8 and Black has a comfortable game;

(b) 8 ♞e3 ♞xd4 9 ♞xd4 ♞c6 10 ♞d2 ♞e7 and the game transposes to the variation examined in the previous game.

8 ... ♞b7

Again the most logical continuation. Other methods of development complicate Black's task:

(a) 8 ... ♞b6 9 ♞e3 ♞g6 10 ♞f5!? ♞c5 11 ♞d6+ ♞e7 12 ♞xc8+ ♞axc8 13 ♞xc5+ ♞xc5+

14 ♞h1 ♞hd8 15 ♞d3, and although Black satisfactorily completes his development and obtains favourable simplifications, the awkward position of his king presents him difficulties in the middlegame (Jansa-Andersson, Titovo Uzhitsa 1978);

(b) 8 ... ♞xd4 9 ♞xd4 ♞c7 (on 9 ... ♞b7 there is the very unpleasant reply 10 f5! ♞c6 11 ♞f2, as was played in the game Gufeld-Taimanov, Vilnius 1975, and on 9 ... ♞c6 10 ♞f2 ♞e7 11 ♞e3 there arises the already familiar position where Black meets with perceptible difficulties) 10 ♞h1 (10 ♞f2!? is also good) 10 ... ♞c6 11 ♞f2 ♞e7 12 ♞e3 0-0 13 ♞ad1 d6 14 ♞g3, and White's position is preferable (Tal-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1974).

9 ♞h1

This prophylactic manoeuvre is regarded by theory as the most consistent. However, the following have also been tested in practice:

(a) 9 ♞b3!? ♞g6 10 ♞e3 ♞e7 (on 10 ... d6 — 11 f5!? ♞ge5 12 fe 13 ♞g4!? is unpleasant for Black) 11 ♞e1 (11 ♞c5!?) 11 ... 0-0 12 ♞d1 d6 13 ♞f2, and White's position is preferable (Mariotti-Taimanov, Leningrad 1977);

(b) 9 ♞f3!? ♞g6 10 ♞e3 ♞e7 11 ♞d2 0-0 12 ♞ad1 ♞b8!? and by continuing 13 a4!?, White could obtain good prospects (Guseinov-

Taimanov, Baku 1983).

It is clear from these examples that deviation from simplifying exchanges in the centre (even at the cost of a tempo!) gives White the chance to underline the shady side of the position of the black knight on e7.

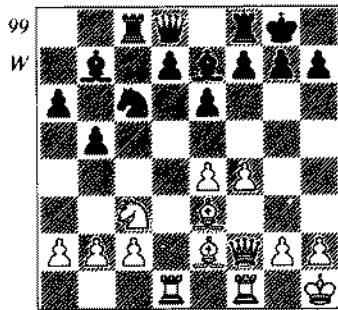
9 ... ♞xd4

It would be inadvisable to delay this operation any longer.

- | | | |
|----|------|-----|
| 10 | ♞xd4 | ♞c6 |
| 11 | ♞f2 | ♞e7 |
| 12 | ♞e3 | 0-0 |
| 13 | ♞ad1 | ♞c8 |

The attempt to prepare the manoeuvre ♞c6-a5-c4 by way of the move 13 ... ♞e8 also warrants consideration. However, in this case the queen turns out to be too passive after 14 ♞h5! (14 ♞b6 is less convincing in view of 14 ... ♞c8 15 ♞f3 d6 16 a3 ♞b8!? 17 ♞d2 ♞d7 18 ♞e3 ♞c5 with equality, Gufeld-Taimanov, USSR 1975) 14 ... ♞c8 (on 14 ... ♞a5 comes the unpleasant 15 f5, as Black does not have the blocking resource f7-f6) and White, by continuing 15 f5!, can develop a dangerous initiative on the kingside.

This position has attracted the attention of theoreticians for some time now. The 'conflict' of this *tabiya* is stipulated firstly by a clear division of spheres of influence. It is clear that White is



excellently placed here for central operations, where he has a space advantage plus pressure along the d-file. To counterbalance this, Black places his hopes on developing an initiative on the queenside, where he has the free c-file and certain territorial advantages at his disposal. It is easy to see that although this position differs from the previous game (Unzicker-Taimanov) only by the position of the white queen (on f2 instead of d2), this factor, however, hinders the important manoeuvre $\text{d}c6\text{-a}5\text{-c}4$.

14 a4!?

A paradoxical idea! It is usually considered that action should not be undertaken on the part of the conflict where the opponent is strongest. But here Beliavsky strives to commence operations on the queenside and to 'dislodge' Black's control over the key c4 outpost, to which the black knight usually heads. 14 $\text{d}f3$ was previ-

ously played here (or 14 $\text{d}b6$ $\text{w}e8$ 15 $\text{d}f3$), but practice has established that the manoeuvre 14 ... $\text{d}b8!$?, which neutralizes the positional threat of 15 e5 and prepares (after 15 ... $\text{d}6$ 16 ... $\text{d}d7$) the transfer of the knight to c5, guarantees Black fully equal counterchances.

14 ... b4

15 $\text{d}b1$

It is interesting that it is now the white knight that is ready to take its place at c4!

15 ... $\text{w}e8$

The idea of this regrouping of forces is highly alluring.

Black wishes to exploit the temporary eviction of the knight from the centre by the implementation of a freeing counterblow. For example, he has excellent play in the 'natural' variation 16 $\text{d}d2$ $\text{d}a5$ 17 $\text{d}d3$ $\text{d}5!$ But, as the course of the game shows, this idea is imperfect and is met by a convincing refutation. That is why, seemingly, it is worth trying another plan of counterplay, less typical in these positions, associated with blocking motifs, namely 15 ... $\text{w}a5$ 16 $\text{b}3$ $\text{d}c5!$? 17 $\text{d}d2$ $\text{d}xe3$ 18 $\text{w}xe3$ $\text{w}c5$ with good prospects. In any event, an adequate unstereotyped answer had to be sought against Beliavsky's original plan.

16 c4!?

Of course, this move was a grievous surprise for me. Beliavsky also claims his rights on the queenside!

16 ... bc

One is forced to make concessions. On the intended 16 ... $\text{d}a5$, the simple reply 17 $\text{d}d2$ is unpleasant.

17 $\text{d}xc3$ $\text{d}a5$

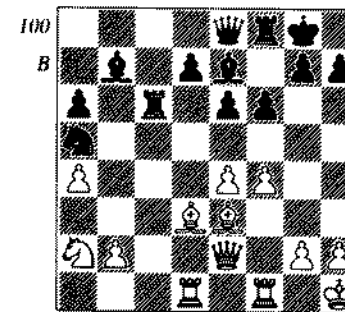
Unjustified obstinacy. The blocking manoeuvre 17 ... $\text{d}b4$ was worth considering.

18 $\text{d}d3!$? f6

The positional threat of 19 e5 now had to be contended with.

19 $\text{w}e2!$? $\text{z}c6$

20 $\text{d}a2!$?



Beliavsky has played the whole of this episode splendidly. He has succeeded (true, not without my help!) in seizing the initiative on the part of the board strategically designated for Black's active operations! Now the threat created by the strong b-pawn marks an indisputable advantage for White.

20 ... $\text{w}c8$

21 b4 $\text{d}c4$

22 $\text{d}g1$ $\text{z}c7$

23 $\text{z}c1$ $\text{d}5!$?

'Sicilian dynamism' is the only trump left at Black's disposal. The singularity of this position lies in the fact that, having conceded his field of battle on the queenside, Black seeks revenge in the centre — the 'rightful' territory of his opponent.

24 f5

Perhaps one could cast a first rebuke at Beliavsky here. He is impatient to dislodge the support of the *avant-garde* knight, but this aim is achieved at significant cost — the concession of another, no less important, outpost on e5.

Consistent and unpleasant for Black would have been the further activation of his queenside forces by way of 24 $\text{z}c3$ followed by 25 $\text{z}f1$.

24 ... $\text{d}e5!$?

Only thus! By sacrificing the flank pawn, Black manages an important centralization of his forces. In the event of 24 ... $\text{e}f$ 25 $\text{e}d$ $\text{d}d6$ (25 ... $\text{d}xd5!$? 26 $\text{d}xf5$ $\text{w}b7$ 27 $\text{d}c3$ $\text{d}f7$ 28 $\text{d}e4$ is bad for Black) 26 $\text{d}b6$ $\text{z}xc1$ 27 $\text{z}xc1$ $\text{w}e8$ 28 $\text{w}e6+$ $\text{w}f7$ 29 $\text{z}c7$ $\text{d}xd5$ 30 $\text{w}xe7$ $\text{w}xe7$ 31 $\text{z}xe7$ $\text{d}xa2$ 32 $\text{d}xa6$; or 24 ... $\text{d}d6$ 25 $\text{e}d$ $\text{e}d$ 26 $\text{z}xc7$ $\text{w}xc7$ 27 $\text{d}xa6$ Beliavsky's calculations would turn out to be

justified. Now though, the struggle is sharpened in a not disadvantageous direction for Black.

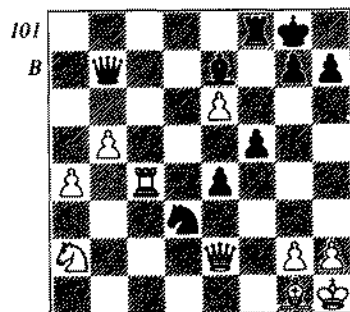
- 25 ♖xc7 ♗xc7
- 26 ♕xa6 de
- 27 ♖c1 ♗b8
- 28 ♕xb7

In the event of 28 fe ♕xa6 29 ♗xa6 ♖d3, the activity of Black's pieces compensates for the insignificant material deficit.

- 28 ... ♗xb7
- 29 fe ♖d3!?

On the tempting 29 ... f5 there is the strong riposte 30 ♗b5!

- 30 ♖c4 f5
- 31 b5



As a result of stormy complications a position has arisen that is difficult to evaluate. It is clear that White's passed pawns are highly dangerous, but against this the activity of Black's pieces is also a not unimportant counterargument. The outcome of the battle in such situations depends

on the energy and conciseness of play from the two sides.

- 31 ... ♖f4?!

A silly inaccuracy! In a tense position, where each tempo counts, one should not take a piece away from an active post. The demands of the moment would be better answered by a dynamic strengthening of the position by way of 31 ... ♗d5 32 ♖d4 (32 ♖c6 ♖e5!) 32 ... ♗b3!? 33 ♖d7 ♕f6!? (33 ... ♗xe6? 34 ♖xd3), after which Black's chances would be by no means worse. Now though, the picture of war changes sharply.

- 32 ♗c2 ♗d5

Alas, the intended 32 ... ♖xe6 won't do in view of 33 ♖c6 with decisive threats.

- 33 ♖c8!

By exchanging rooks, White guarantees his passed pawn a 'green light'.

- 33 ... ♗xe6
- 34 ♖xf8+ ♕xf8
- 35 b6 e3

Black also has a passed pawn, but it is one tempo down ...

- 36 b7 e2
- 37 b8(♗) ♖g6!?

Of course, not 37 ... e1(♗) in view of 38 ♗xf4.

- 38 ♗bb3

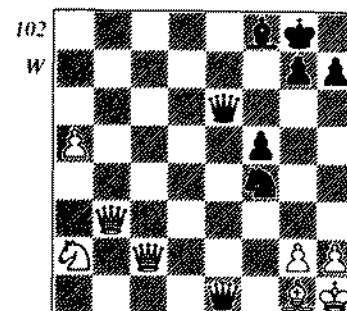
It is easy to lose one's way with such an unaccustomed amount of queens on the board. The prosaic 38 ♗bb1 e1(♗) 39 ♗xe1 ♗xe1

40 ♗xf5 would undoubtedly be stronger.

- 38 ... e1(♗)
- 39 a5

Two queens appear insufficient. Yet another is needed for victory ...

- 39 ... ♖f4



- 40 ♗cc4?!

It may seem strange, but this natural move puts all of White's achievements in doubt. 40 a6! leads to a win.

- 40 ... ♖f7?

In mutual time trouble Black returns the mistake, the reason being — routine thinking. It is clear that the pin on the king must be broken, but how? The usual formula would indicate that the king should head towards the centre in an endgame. This is true as a rule, but with four queens the normal criteria cannot conform to the rules. Indeed, in the current situation it is precisely the 'incorrect' move 40 ... ♖h8! which,

paradoxically, saves the situation. For example, 41 ♗xe6 (otherwise 41 ... ♗xg1 +!) 41 ... ♖xe6 42 ♗e3 (42 ... ♕c5 was threatened) 42 ... ♗xe3 43 ♕xe3 ♖c7 44 ♕f4 ♖a6 45 ♖g1 ♖g8 46 ♖f2 ♖f7 47 ♖e3 ♖e6 48 ♖d4 ♕d6!?, and the endgame assumes a drawish character.

Now though, the game ends quickly.

- 41 a6 ♕c5

I had placed my hopes on this thrust, however, as became clear, it was without sufficient basis.

- 42 ♗b7+ ♖g6
- 43 ♗xc5 ♗xa2
- 44 a7

The appearance on the board of a fifth (!) queen is inevitable, therefore **Black resigned**.

An unusual and interesting game in which both players, although not with equal success, researched new paths in the standard formation.

Regarding these examples, it should be emphasized that the asymmetrical positions of the various Sicilian schemes and ramifications, particularly where the motifs of strategic confrontations are expressed in dynamically changing forms, invariably demand concrete and original decisions, even involving departure from the conventional classical criteria. Flexibility of ideas,

skillful combinations in the struggle for the initiative, combined with a degree of prophylaxis — these are the main demands made of the followers of the boundless and rich Sicilian Defence.

The following game is also instructive of these situations.

Karpov–Taimanov
USSR Team Ch. 1983

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	♝c6
3	d4	cd
4	♝xd4	e6
5	♝c3	a6
6	♗e2	♝ge7
7	0-0	

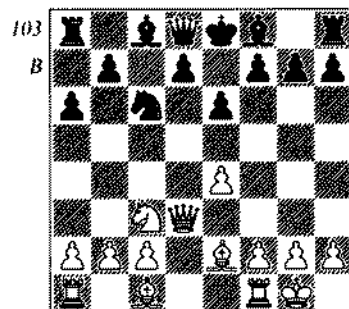
This natural method is the quickest way of developing, although appearing to fall in with Black's opening plan, it is nevertheless very cunning and sets complicated problems for the opponent.

7	...	♝xd4
8	♗xd4	♝c6
9	♗d3	

White's idea is to transfer his queen to the third rank on the kingside. 9 ♗e3 can also serve this purpose, although this is less accurate as it allows the strong paradoxical reply 9 ... ♗d6!? preventing the transfer of the white queen to the g3 square.

In the game Kuzmin–Taimanov

(Leningrad, 1977) there followed: 10 f4 0-0 (the immediate 10 ... ♗c7 is also good) 11 ♖h1 ♗c7!? 12 ♗h3 d5!? 13 ♗d3 (13 e5 f5!?) 13 ... ♝b4!? 14 ed ♝xd3 15 ♗xd3 b5 16 ♚d1 (or 16 de ♗xe6 and Black has excellent play for the pawn) 16 ... b4 17 ♗e4 ♗xd5 18 ♗f3 (18 ♗f6+? gf 19 ♗g3+ ♗g5!) 18 ... ♗b7 19 ♗e3 f5!?, and Black seized the initiative.



9 ... ♝b4

It was long considered (including at the time when this game was actually played) that such a thrust by Black could advantageously exploit the shaky position of the white queen on d3, ousting it from the third rank to a less active position — (d2 or d1). But surprising and brilliant discoveries are possible in modern theory, and quite recently English chess-players demonstrated a bold gambit idea of seizing the initiative by way of the manoeuvre 10 ♗g3!. Indeed, after 10 ... ♝xc2 (if 10 ...

♗e7 then 11 e5!) 11 ♗g5! f6 12 ♗f4! ♖f7 (12 ... ♝xa1 13 ♗h5+ g6 14 ♗xg6+ hg 15 ♗xg6+ ♖e7 16 e5!) 12 ♗c7 ♗e8 14 ♚ad1 White's pressure is more than enough compensation for the pawn.

That is why Black does not play 9 ... ♝b4 anymore and, bearing in mind that 9 ... ♗e7 is also bad in view of 10 ♗g3 0-0 11 ♗h6 ♗f6 12 ♚ad1, is content with the more modest prophylactic continuation 9 ... ♗c7, which guarantees a somewhat constrained, but not entirely unpromising position. For example, 10 ♗g5!? (if 10 f4, then 10 ... ♗e7 11 ♗g3 0-0 12 ♗e3 b5 13 ♗d3 f6!?) 10 ... ♗d6!? 11 ♗h3 (or 11 ♖h1 f6 12 ♗h4 ♗e5 13 ♗d2 ♝g6 14 ♗h5 ♖e7!?) Burnazovic–Krnjic, Yugoslavia 1986) 11 ... 0-0 12 ♚ad1 f6 13 ♗c1 b5 14 a3 b4!? 15 ab ♝xb4 and Black has counterplay.

10 ♗d2

As is clear from the previous note, 10 ♗g3 is stronger here. However, although the game loses in its theoretical sense, it gains in cognition, in as far as the subsequent events become highly characteristic of the strategic motifs that lay in our chosen system.

10 ... ♗e7

11 b3

White does not, at the moment,

intend to drive away the knight by way of 11 a3, as in the event of 11 ... ♝c6 12 f4 0-0 13 ♗f3, Black has good prospects after 13 ... ♗c5+ 14 ♖h1 ♝d4.

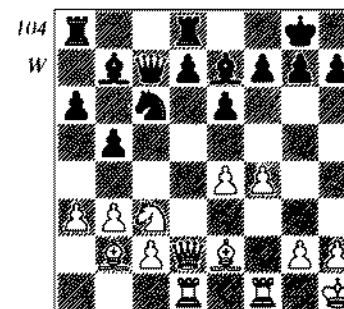
11	...	0-0
12	♗b2	♗c7
13	♚ad1	

Also possible is the plan of king-side activity by way of 13 ♖h1 ♚d8 14 a3 ♝c6 15 f4, but this is purely a matter of taste.

13 ... ♚d8

The continuation 13 ... b5 is of approximately equal merit. After 14 a3 ♝c6 15 ♗e3 (or 15 ♝b1 ♚d8 16 ♗e3 ♗b7, as in the game Guimaraes–Taimanov, Lisbon 1985) 15 ... b4 16 ♝b1 ♚d8 17 a4 ♝a5 18 ♗d3 ♗b7 19 ♗d4 ♚de8 20 ♗b6 ♗e5 Black has a solid position (Kir. Georgiev–Taimanov, Plovdiv 1984).

14	a3	♝c6
15	f4	b5
16	♖h1	♗b7



Again a familiar structure, where White has the advantage in the centre, and Black places his hopes on queenside activity. True, the present case has its own peculiarities — White's dark-squared bishop is placed on the long diagonal which increases the attacking possibilities, but his queenside pawn chain is weakened and may turn out to be vulnerable. In short, the standard Sicilian conflict is intensified here even more than usual.

17 ♖e3!?

Karpov not only shifts his queen to the kingside, but also removes it opportunely from the 'explosive' d-file.

On the direct continuation 17 ♜f3 b4! 18 ab ♖xb4 19 ♜g3 f6 Black's counterplay becomes truly perceptible.

17 ... b4!?

18 ♖b1!?

Only thus! In the event of 18 ab ♖xb4 19 ♜d2 Black seizes the initiative via 19 ... d5.

18 ... ba

Otherwise 19 a4 would block Black's chances on the queenside.

19 ♖xa3 d5!?

As usual! Dynamism above all.

20 ♗g3

Of course, in the event of 20 f5 d4! 21 ♗h3 ef 22 ef ♗f6, or 20 e5 d4! 21 ♗g3 ♖b4 and White cannot even dream of the initiative.

20 ... ♗f8

21 e5(!)

It is highly tempting to constrain the opponent in the centre, but it may be precisely this move that deprives White of his attacking rhythm. 21 ed ed 22 ♗d3 conforms more with the spirit of the position.

21 ... ♖e7!?

22 ♗d3 ♜ac8

23 ♗h3 ♖f5

23 ... g6 deserves attention, but since neither 24 ♗xf5 ef 25 ♗xf5 (in view of 25 ... ♗xa3 26 ♗xa3 ♗xc2), or 24 g4 d4+ 25 ♖g1 (in view of 25 ♖h6), are dangerous for Black, the text move is also fully acceptable.

24 ♖b1

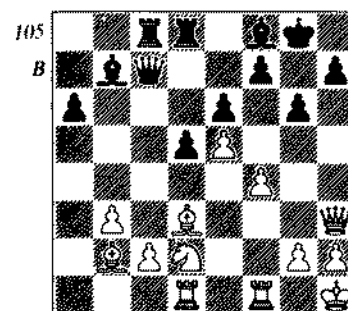
Black has successfully repelled the first attack on the kingside and, in order to avoid his opponent's counter-attack, Karpov quickly pulls up his reserves, striving to improve the coordination of his pieces.

24 ... g6

25 ♖d2(105)

25 ... ♗b6!?

An instructive mistake, turning all of Black's achievements to nothing. Of course, every true 'Sicilianite' (and I must include myself in this renowned order) would be inclined to play here the immediate 25 ... d4!, submitting to the will of the powerful b7



bishop, whose role is invaluable in similar constructions. Indeed, in this case after 26 ♖c4 (how else to repel the threat 26 ... ♖e3?) 26 ... ♗c5 Black's position turns out to be superior. Karpov masterly exploits this fundamental slip!

26 ♗xf5!

Of course, I had only considered the continuation 26 ♖f3 d4! 27 ♗xf5 ♗xf3!?

26 ... ef

27 ♖f3!

Blockade at any price! Sacrificing a pawn (and then further pawns!) Karpov sharply changes the picture of battle to his advantage.

27 ... ♜xc2

28 ♗d4 ♗c6

It would be very dangerous to take the second pawn. After 28 ... ♗xb3 29 ♗h4! White's attack would become scarcely resistible.

29 ♗h4! ♜e8

30 e6!

White's pieces suddenly acquire devastating force.

30 ... fe

Forced. On 30 ... ♜xe6 or 30 ... ♗xe6 then 31 ♖g5 decides.

31 ♖e5! ♗c7

32 ♖xg6! ♗g7

33 ♖e5

The situation has clarified. Although Black has repelled the direct threats and even retained an extra pawn, matters for him are clearly unenviable. The blockade on the dark squares deprives his pieces of their desired manoeuvrability, and the king's shelter is also shaky.

33 ... ♗e7

34 ♗g3

Karpov considers that 34 ♗e1 would be even more energetic with the threat of the manoeuvre ♜f1-f3-g3.

34 ... ♜ec8

35 ♜fe1 ♜c7

36 ♖f3! ♖h8

37 ♗xg7+

37 ♗xg7+! ♗xg7 38 ♜xe6 would be very strong. For example, 38 ... ♗xd4 39 ♖xd4 ♜d2 40 ♜e1 ♜xd1 41 ♜xd1.

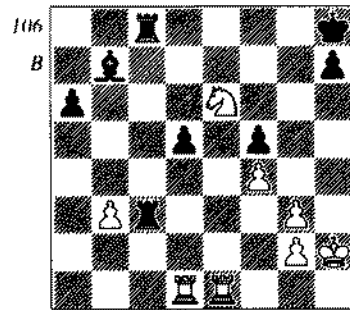
37 ... ♗xg7

38 ♖d4 ♗xg3

39 hg ♜c3

40 ♖xe6 ♜c8

41 ♖h2



The game was adjourned in this position and Black sealed his move. At first glance, it is not clear who is better, but who would decline to 'regale oneself' of an enemy pawn in the endgame? Such, alas, actually occurs ...

41 ... ♖xb3?

Disregard for the fate of his bishop costs Black the game. For the second time in this game I was given the chance to return the long-range bishop into the game and for the second time I did not take advantage of such a principled opportunity. Meanwhile, after 41 ... d4! (again, even in the endgame one must remember dynamism of pieces before everything) 42 ♗xd4 ♕e4 43 g4!? ♚g8!? 44 g5 h6 45 ♚h1 ♚g6 Black would still have chances of saving the game.

42 ♗d4 ♚b6
 43 ♗xf5 ♚f8
 44 ♗d4 ♚g8
 45 ♚e7 ♚g7

46 ♚de1 ♚h6+

47 ♗g1 ♚hg6

Black has active rooks, but how can he play without a bishop?

48 f5! ♚b6

Alas, 48 ... ♚xg3 doesn't work in view of 49 f6! ♚xg2+ 50 ♗h1 ♚g8 51 f7!

49 ♚7e6!? ♚xe6

50 fe ♚g8

51 e7 ♚e8

52 ♗f5 ♕c6

53 ♗d6 ♚g8

54 e8(♖) ♕xe8

55 ♗xe8 ♚xg3

56 ♗f6!

Black resigns.

A tense duel, in which the dynamic factors of the struggle again played a decisive role!

The Sensitive d6 Point

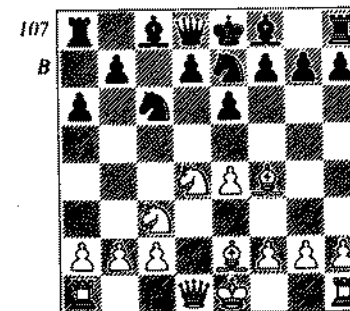
Amongst the characteristic peculiarities of the positive and negative sides of the Taimanov system, there is one positional drawback which is visible 'to the naked eye'. This is the weakness of the d6 square in front of a backward pawn. It also often makes itself felt in the Paulsen system, but in the Taimanov system, where the knight on e7 blocks the main defender of the positional 'hole' — the bishop on f8 — the weakness on d6 becomes particularly striking. The whole question is how

significant this organic defect of the opening formation is and how can White exploit it? Practice does not provide a simple answer, but the controversy surrounding this problem does not disappear. In any case, the strategy of 'permanent' pressure on the d6 square or its occupation, determines the character of the struggle in many games that are played in the Taimanov system, and therefore every adherent of this system should capably possess the basic methods of opposing such a plan.

Let us examine some characteristic examples.

Beliavsky-Taimanov Leningrad 1977

1 e4 c5
 2 ♗f3 ♗c6
 3 d4 cd
 4 ♗xd4 e6
 5 ♗c3 a6
 6 ♕e2 ♗ge7
 7 ♕f4



The most principled attempt at exposing the defect of Black's opening development — the weakened d6 square comes under direct fire. True, on this continuation the white bishop turns out to be in the range of attack from Black's pieces, which in many cases allows Black to gain time for the mobilization of his forces. Therefore that same idea is often put into effect in another way — after the moves 7 ♗b3 ♗a5 8 0-0 ♗ec6 9 ♕f4, which will be examined in another example.

7 ... ♗g6

The best, but not the only correct retort to White's plan.

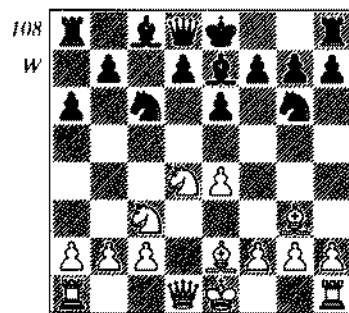
The routine unloading of the centre by way of 7 ... ♗xd4 8 ♖xd4 ♗c6 would be misplaced here. After 9 ♖d2 b5 (or 9 ... f6 10 0-0 ♗e5 11 ♕g3 ♕e7 12 f4 ♗f7 13 a4 as was played in the game Ermenkov-Krnic, Smederevska Palanka 1981) 10 0-0 ♕e7 11 ♚ad1 White's pressure adopts a perceptible character.

Matters are cheerless for Black also in the event of 7 ... d6 8 ♗xc6 ♗xc6 9 ♖d2 ♕e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♚fd1 ♗e5 12 ♖d4 ♖c7 13 ♚d2!? ♚d8 14 ♚ad1 (Marjanovic-Rajkovic, Yugoslavia 1979).

8 ♗xc6

The most consistent way to the occupation of the key d6 square. Exploiting the fact that the reply

8 ... dc is clearly unfavourable for Black in view of 9 ♖xd8+ ♜xd8 10 0-0-0+, White carries out his planned invasion without loss of time. True, this usually involves simplifications, which to a certain degree facilitates Black's problems of defence. The continuation 8 ♗g3 is also a popular alternative (8 ♗e3 loses the sense of the previous move and Black obtains a comfortable game by way of 8 ... ♜c7 9 0-0 b5, Tal-Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1976), which supports the control over the d6 square while retaining battle material. In this case after 8 ... ♗e7 one of the fundamental positions arises on which it is worth paying some attention.



The basic variations, characteristic of this particular scheme, are as follows:

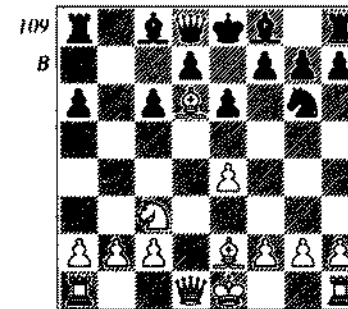
(a) 9 0-0 (9 ♖d2 would be a mistake in view of 9 ... ♗g5!? and if 10 f4, then 10 ... ♗xf4! 11

♗xf4 ♗xf4 12 ♖xf4 ♗xd4 with advantage to Black; Lanc-Taimanov, Bucharest 1975) 9 ... 0-0 10 ♖d2 d6 11 ♗ad1 ♜c7!? (an important moment, by exploiting the fact that the d6 pawn is indirectly defended — 12 ♗xc6 ♖xc6 13 ♗xd6? ♗d8 — Black succeeds in strengthening the weak d6 point and harmoniously completes his development) 12 ♜h1 ♗d8 13 f4 ♗xd4 14 ♖xd4 ♗f6 15 ♖e3 ♗d7 and Black has fully equal play (Torre-Taimanov, Wijk aan Zee 1981);

(b) 9 ♗b3 (by such means White 'unloads' the d-file, so as to increase the pressure on the d6 square, however, this involves a new loss of time) 9 ... d6 (9 ... b5 is worse in view of 10 ♖d2 0-0 11 ♗ad1 ♖b6 12 ♗d6 and White achieves his goal, Westerinen-Taimanov, Yurmala 1978) 10 ♖d2 0-0 11 ♗d1 ♗ge5 12 f4 ♗d7 13 0-0 b5 and Black is completely equal (analysis).

These examples examined above show that delay by White in the implementation of his plan of occupying the d6 square allows Black to conveniently organize the defence of his weak point. This is an important argument in favour of direct strategy, involving the exchange of the knight, to the research of which we shall now revert.

8 ... bc
9 ♗d6



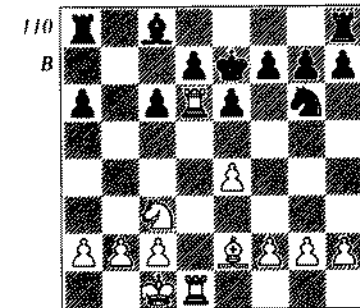
The critical position. White has fully realized his plan and erected a mighty outpost in Black's camp, at his most vulnerable point. The question now is — how solid is this conquest?

9 ... ♖b6

A double-edged decision. It is as though Black ignores White's key strategy and temporarily abandons the struggle for control over the d6 square, striving towards an independent counter-initiative on the queenside.

Fundamentally, a different treatment may be more solid from the point of view of classical principles, but it would be psychologically 'conformist' to play for equality with the aid of exchanges and the transition into an ending by way of 9 ... ♗xd6 10 ♖xd6 ♖e7 11 0-0-0 ♖xd6 12 ♗xd6 ♜e7 (12 ... ♗d8 13 ♗hd1 ♜c7, as Garcia

played against Adorjan in Banja Luka 1979 is less logical) 13 ♗hd1. Since this method is defended by many followers and researched in detail, it is worth dwelling on for a moment.



This position occupies a particular place in a string of formations typical of the Taimanov system. It is dissimilar to complex multi-piece middlegames in its directness and concreteness of strategy. White achieves his opening goal, having 'pinned his opponent down' on the d-file to the weak pawn and having occupied the weak d6 square even in the early stages. However, with this the position is significantly simplified and if Black gradually succeeds in regrouping his forces to oust the white rook from the blockading square, White's initiative will quickly expire. But nevertheless, as practice has shown, Black's path to equality is not

simple. Here are a few examples:

(a) 13 ... ♖a7?! 14 g3 f6 15 f4 ♚d8 16 ♘a4 ♘h8 17 c4 ♗f7 18 c5! with strong pressure for White (Psakhis-Romanishin, Irkutsk 1986);

(b) 13 ... f6 14 g3 ♗e5 15 ♘a4 a5 (or 15 ... ♗f7 16 ♚6d3 ♚b8 17 c4!?) 16 f4 ♗f7 17 ♚6d3 ♚b8 18 ♚a3!? d6 19 ♗c3 with an initiative for White (Marjanovic-Rajkovic, Vrsac 1979);

(c) 13 ... ♗f4 14 ♗f3 ♚b8 (14 ... ♗d5? 15 ed ♗xd6 16 dc+ ♗c7 17 cd ♗b7 18 ♗xb7 ♗xb7 19 ♗e4!) 15 ♚6d2 ♚d8 (on 15 ... d5? then 16 b3 is good, followed by 17 ♘a4 with a blockade, also in the event of 15 ... e5 16 ♗g4!? White has the advantage, as demonstrated in the game Kupreichik-Taimanov, New Delhi 1982, but 15 ... g5!? is worth considering) 16 g3 ♗g6 17 ♗e2 (if 17 b3 then 17 ... d6 18 ♘a4 ♗e5!? 19 ♗h5 g5!? 20 f3 ♗b7 with equality, Adorjan-Taimanov, Budapest 1982) 17 ... f6 18 f4 and White's game is, as before, preferable.

Even this cursory survey leaves the feeling that many problems are concealed for Black in the resulting endgame. Therefore, counter to the classical laws, it is sometimes tempting to try ideas, even with a certain risk, of an original and double-edged nature, as for example, in the text game.

10 0-0!?

Only thus! White must not balk at material sacrifices in the struggle for the initiative. The routine continuation 10 ♗xf8 ♗xf8 11 ♗d3 would not set serious problems to opponent. For example, 11 ... ♚b8!? (of course not 11 ... ♗xb2, since after 12 0-0 Black is hopelessly behind in development) 12 0-0 ♗g6 13 ♗g3 (or 13 ♗d6 c5!?) 13 ... e5!? and Black is fully equal.

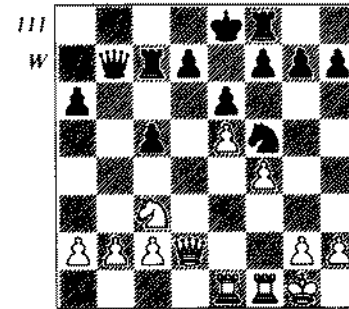
10 ... c5

It would be risky to accept the pawn sacrifice here by way of 10 ... ♗xd6 11 ♗xd6 ♗xb2. After 12 ♗c5 (12 ♘a4 ♗e5 13 ♗a3 is also interesting) 12 ... ♗b8 13 ♚ab1 ♗e5 14 ♗a3 (14 ♗xe5 ♗xe5 15 f4 ♗g6 16 ♘a4 also merits consideration) 14 ... f6 (if 14 ... d6 then 15 ♚fd1 c5 16 ♗b5!) 15 g3 ♗f7 16 f4 ♗d4+ 17 ♗g2 Black's position is highly uncomfortable. Now, however, Black exchanges the mighty enemy bishop and although he loses the right to castle, his pieces achieve dynamism.

11 ♗xf8 ♚xf8!?

The unusual situation demands non-routine decisions! On the natural continuation 11 ... ♗xf8 12 ♗d2 ♗g6 13 f4 0-0 14 f5 Black comes under attack. Here his king is sufficiently safe in the centre of the board for the moment.

12 ♗d2 ♚a7
13 f4 ♚c7
14 e5 ♗b7
15 ♗f3 ♗h4!?
16 ♗xb7 ♗xb7
17 ♚ae1 ♗f5



Although White's position undoubtedly looks attractive, Black also has his achievements — his pieces occupy active positions and he has the f7-f6 break against the enemy centre in reserve. Of course, the king would be better situated on the sheltered g8 square.

18 b3

'Strong arm methods' would hardly be appropriate here. In the event of 18 g4 ♗d4 19 ♗e4 ♗xb2!? 20 ♗d6+ (20 ♚b1?? ♗xb1) 20 ... ♗e7 21 f5 f6!? White obtains nothing with his intrepid attack, and on 18 ♗e4 the simple 18 ... ♗xb2 may follow.

18 ... h5

19 ♗e4 c4!?

Again the motif of 'dynamism' of play shows the viability of Black's unusual construction — the c-file begins to function.

20 ♗h1 h4
21 ♚f3 f6!?

The other, quiet rook is prepared to enter the fray. Vigilance is now demanded from White.

22 ♗d6+

The key outpost is in White's control again, but even so his means of developing the initiative are diminished.

22 ... ♗xd6
23 ed

Of course, White can count on nothing in the event of 23 ♗xd6 ♗c6.

23 ... ♚e5

Control over the centre is in Black's hands and this guarantees him sufficient counterchances.

24 bc

On 24 f5, there would follow 24 ... ♗d5!?. Now though White calculates an attack after 24 ... ♚xc4 25 ♗d3.

24 ... ♗f7!?

An important prophylactic. The c4 pawn has nowhere to go. On 25 ♗d3 there is the reply 25 ... ♗b4.

25 ♗f2 ♚xc4
26 ♗xh4 ♚xc2
27 f5 e5
28 ♚g3 ♗g8

A peaceful haven is achieved and Black is now prepared to switch to counter-attack, for example, by way of 29 ... ♖d5. Therefore Beliavsky forces a draw:

29 ♖xg7+ ♔xg7

30 ♖g4+

Perpetual check. **Drawn.**

What conclusions can be drawn from the examples examined?

Above all, the weakness of the d6 square, one way or another, may be exploited by White as a strategic motif in the fight for the initiative and cannot be discounted. In many cases, having invaded the vulnerable point with one of his pieces, White significantly cramps his opponent's forces and creates perceptible positional pressure. These factors may influence the course of the game even into the endgame. However, the occupation of an outpost in the enemy camp does not determine an advantage in itself and it should be supported by the manoeuvring of other pieces and active flank operations. If Black succeeds in hampering such an activation of forces or repels his opponent's action with counter-operations (most often on the queenside), White's initiative, as a rule, dries up quite quickly. It may also be noted that direct strategy by White is the best way to oppose unsteretyped, double-edged and,

significantly, highly concrete replies.

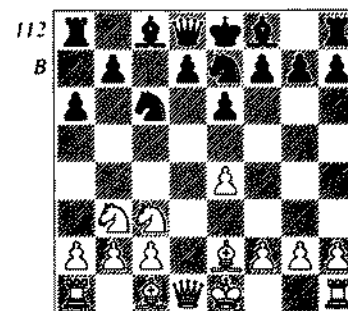
And If the Unloading is Hindered?

As piece exchanging in the centre is one of the standard motifs in the Taimanov system, allowing Black to simplify play and to adjust the harmonious deployment of his forces, it is natural for White, in the form of radical countermeasure, to make an attempt to remove his central knight from the 'zone of fire' and with such means deprive his opponent of an important 'lever' in the system. So variations of original structure arose, determining a special theme in the theoretical dispute revolving around the problems of the Taimanov system. They merit our attention.

Tukmakov-Taimanov USSR Ch. 1973

1	e4	c5
2	♟f3	♞c6
3	d4	cd
4	♞xd4	e6
5	♞c3	a6
6	♙e2	♞ge7
7	♞b3	

A well-motivated strategic ploy. Avoiding simplifying exchanges, White strives to cross his opponent's opening plans and to



highlight the awkward placing of the knight on e7. True, this is achieved at the cost of certain concessions — the manoeuvre costs a tempo, which Black may use for the quick development of his forces, and the position of the knight on b3, far removed from the focus of forthcoming events, has its shady side. However, this idea has gained many followers and is encountered, as we shall see, in different variations. Note that another knight retreat — 7 ♟f3 — has also been tried, but it is, perhaps, less advisable. After 7 ... ♞g6 8 h4 ♙e7 9 h5 ♞ge5 10 ♞xe5 ♞xe5 11 h6 g5!? Black has excellent play (Tischbierek-Van Mil, Kecskemet 1984).

7 ... b5

The most popular riposte. Black pre-emptively the possibility of the queenside being clamped by way of 8 a4, and, moreover, prepares an outpost for the eventual (and standard!) knight manoeuvre —

♞c6-a5-c4. In practice, other possible treatments have been examined:

(a) 7 ... ♞g6 8 0-0 ♙e7 (here and on the next move the advance b5 leads to main line positions, but Black's aim here is quick development) 9 ♙e3 0-0 10 a4 (or 10 f4 ♖c7 11 ♙d3 b5 12 ♖h5 b4 13 ♞e2 f6!? Jansa-Taimanov, Suhumi 1973) 10 ... b6 11 ♖d2 ♖c7 12 ♖fd1 ♖b8 13 f4 ♞a5!? and Black has full equality (Tsheshkovsky-Romanishin, USSR Ch. 1980);

(b) 7 ... ♞a5 (the aim of this manoeuvre is to free the c6 square for the e7 knight with subsequently rapid kingside development. Moreover, in many cases the knight can be relocated on c4 after appropriate preparation) 8 0-0 ♞ec6 9 ♙f4 (again the familiar motif — the siege of the d6 square!) 9 ... b5 (the unsophisticated 9 ... ♙e7 10 ♖d3 0-0 is also possible, as in the game Beliavsky-Taimanov, USSR 1983) 10 ♙d6 (or 10 e5 ♙b7 11 ♖d2 ♞c4 12 ♙xc4 bc 13 ♞d4 ♙b4!?) 10 ... ♙xd6 11 ♖xd6 ♖e7 12 ♖fd1 ♖xd6 13 ♖xd6 ♙e7 14 ♖ad1 ♞b7 15 ♖b2 g5!? and Black has roughly level chances in the ending (Sibarevic-Taimanov, Vrnjacka Banja 1974).

8 ♙e3

8 0-0 is also often played here, which after 8 ... ♞g6 9 ♙e3 leads

to the main line via a transposition of moves. It is inadvisable for White to avoid this as, for example, in the event of 9 f4 ♗e7 10 e5 ♗b7 11 ♗e3 ♖a5 Black seizes the initiative (Dvoiris-Shestopero, USSR 1980).

8 ... ♗g6
8 ... ♖a5 would be misplaced here in view of 9 ♗c5!?

9 f4
9 0-0 ♗e7 10 a4 is interesting. After 10 ... b4 11 a5!? ♖xa5!? 12 ♖a4 ♗xb3 13 ♗b6 ♖xa1 14 ♗xd8 ♗xd8 15 ♗xa1 a complicated position arises with approximately equal chances (analysis by Panchenko).

9 ... ♗e7
10 g3!?

In this way White endeavours to exploit the somewhat uncomfortable position of the black knight for an attack on the kingside. More standard play is reached after the continuation 10 0-0 0-0 11 ♗e1 (or 11 ♗d2 d6 12 a3 ♗b8 13 g3 ♗c7 14 ♗f3 ♗d8 15 ♖d4 ♗b7, as in the game Garcia Gonzales-Lebrede, Cienfuegos 1983) 11 ... d6 12 ♗d1 ♗c7 13 f5 ♖ge5 14 ♗g3 ♖h8 15 fe fe 16 ♗xf8+ ♗xf8 17 ♗f1 ♗d7 with roughly level chances (Lanc-Taimanov, Brno 1975).

10 ... 0-0

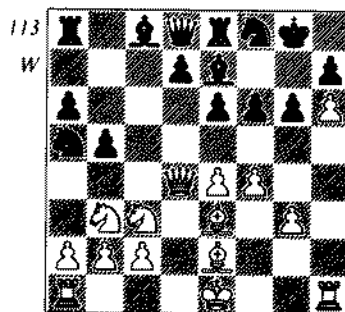
Played too placidly. 10 ... d6 11 h4 ♗b7 12 h5 ♖f8 deserves

preference, with the subsequent 13 ... ♖d7 and a comfortable game.

11 h4 ♗e8
12 ♗d2 ♖a5!?

Using the breathing space, Black throws his active resources into the fray. The struggle sharpens significantly.

13 h5 ♖f8
14 h6 g6
15 ♗d4 f6



A colourful picture! The first impression is that White has considerably outstripped his opponent in the 'bayonet' charge. He has a significant advantage in space and an active deployment of his forces. But it is by no means simple to approach Black's solid fortress, let alone to invade it. Moreover, the Sicilian potential of Black's counterchances on the queenside is also important. If he has sufficient time to bring his bishop to b7 and his rook to c8, then concrete threats will appear. In short, the position demands

extremely energetic play and now, with his next move, Tukmakov stirs up boundless tactical complications.

16 ♖d5!? ♗xb3

Of course not 16 ... ed in view of 17 ♗xd5+ ♖e6 18 ♗xa8 ♖c6 19 0-0-0.

17 ab ♗b7!?
18 ♖xe7+ ♗xe7
19 ♗f3 e5!?

Again, as often happens in Sicilian schemes, Black is rescued by dynamism. His imprisoned pieces suddenly come to life.

20 fe ♗xe5
21 ♗xe5 ♗xe5
22 ♗d4 ♗e6
23 0-0 ♗xe4

The goal is achieved — White's menacing centre is broken and Black's dangers are behind him.

24 ♗xf6!?

Only thus can one fight for the initiative. In the event of 24 ♗xe4 ♗xe4 25 ♗xf6 would be the strong reply 25 ... ♗e3.

24 ... ♗xf3
25 ♗xf3 ♗ae8
26 ♗c3 g5!?
27 ♗f5 ♗g6
28 ♗b4 g4!?

Now the threat to the h6 pawn forces White to search for further simplifications, on which his remaining positional pressure will quickly fizzle out.

29 ♗af1 ♖e6

30 ♗f6 ♗xf6
31 ♗xf6 ♖d4
32 e3 ♖f3+
33 ♖f2 ♖e5!?

Black's counterplay now completely balances the chances and the game nears a peaceful conclusion.

34 ♗d6 ♖d3+
35 ♖f1 ♗e1+

Drawn.

Of course, on the basis of just a few games it is impossible to draw categorical conclusions, but, nevertheless, the impression is created that White's plan, which involves concessions of time and space for the sake of the 'compromised' knight on e7, should not be dangerous for Black. But that does not mean to say that the white knight stands better on d4 than on b3!

The Light and Shade of the Kingside Fianchetto

Among the various problems which must be solved in the Sicilian Defence by both players, surprisingly (and something to which, in my opinion, theoreticians do not pay enough attention!), the problem of choosing the optimal square for the development of the light-squared bishop is never simple for White. Indeed, on e2 it blocks the d1-h5 diagonal for the

possible transfer of the queen to the kingside and the e-file for the activation of the rook; on the d3 square, although solidly defending the e4 pawn, it is deprived of mobility and blocks the open d-file, along which White can often organize notable pressure; the position of the bishop on the c4 or b5 square would be clearly shaky and only stimulate Black's active operations on the queenside. In short, an ideal square cannot be found for the bishop on its 'home' diagonal f1-a6. So the idea arose to develop it on the long diagonal h1-a8 by means of a fianchetto. This method became highly popular and obtained proper recognition as a legitimate idea in various lines of the Sicilian formation. The Taimanov system is one of these, and the specific motifs inherent in it, find their own original interpretation.

A typical position arises after the traditional introductory moves:

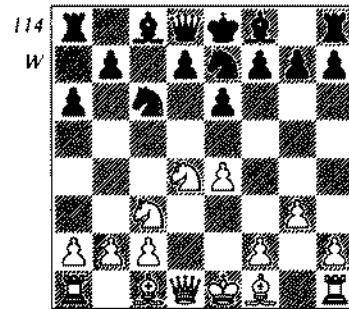
1	e4	c5
2	Qf3	Qc6
3	d4	cd
4	Qxd4	e6
5	Qc3	a6

And now:

6	g3	Qge7
---	----	------

We should pause here, as the last moves merit commentary.

Let us consider the positional



and negative sides of the idea of the fianchetto of the bishop. It is clear that the bishop occupies a highly comfortable position on g2, not hindering the activity of the other pieces and solidly defending the castled position. Moreover, it defends the e4 pawn, which is usually subjected to a siege by the opponent, and increases pressure on the centre by at the same time controlling the d5 point. But, along with this, the function of the fianchettoed bishop is limited by its comparative immobility, and its withdrawal from the f1-a6 diagonal determines a loss of influence on the e4 square, which usually serves as a main outpost for the Black queenside offensive in the Taimanov and Paulsen systems after the traditional transfer of the knight from c6 via a5 to c4. So the 'light and shade' idea of a fianchetto is tightly interlaced, not displaying an advantage over

other schemes of development, but giving play an undoubted originality.

On Black's part, the move 6 ... Qge7, which determines the switch to the rails of the Taimanov system (note that the Paulsen handling by way of 6 ... Qf6 or 6 ... Qc7 and the Scheveningen — 6 ... d6 7 Qg2 Qd7, are also worthy alternatives), is the idea now familiar to the reader — Black plans to unload in the centre by way of an exchange on d4 with a subsequent ejection of the white queen 'with tempo' by way of the move Qe7-c6. Note that this standard motif often occurs by different means — 6 ... Qxd4 7 Qxd4 Qe7. However, on this order of moves one must contend with the thrust 8 Qf4, emphasizing the weakness of the d6 square. As practice shows this factor has a good deal of significance. For example, 8 ... Qc6 (or 8 ... Qg6 9 Qd6 Qxd6 10 Qxd6 Qe7 11 Qb6!? Qd8 12 Qa4 Qxb6 13 Qxb6 Qb8 14 0-0-0; Kholmov-Karpov, Riga 1970) 9 Qd2 f6 (if 9 ... b5 then 10 Qg2 Qb7 11 0-0 Qc8 12 a4! b4 13 Qd5! with an attack for White) 10 Qd6 Qxd6 11 Qxd6 Qe7 12 Qd2 b5 13 0-0-0!? Qe5 14 f4 Qf7 15 Qg2 Qa7 16 Qhe1 0-0 17 Qe3 Qc7 18 Qd3 and Black is faced with difficulties (Ciric-Krnic, Yugoslavia 1982).

Let us return to the position of the last diagram and examine examples that are characteristic of the possibilities in this original opening scheme.

Mnatsakanian-Taimanov

Eretan 1986

7 Qg2

In any event, the most natural continuation, although as we shall see later, more problems face Black after the retreat of the knight from the centre, which prevents simplifying exchanges.

Note, incidentally, that attempts have also been made in practice to depreciate Black's intended idea by preparing a convenient retreat for the white queen in the event of the exchange. Here are a few examples:

(a) 7 f4 (by such means White frees the f2 square and simultaneously strengthens his position in the centre. However the weakening of the g1-a7 diagonal also has a shady side) 7 ... Qxd4 8 Qxd4 b5!? (if 8 ... Qc6 immediately then 9 Qf2 Qe7 10 Qe3 with excellent play for White) 9 Qg2 Qb7 10 0-0 Qc8 (this is where the answer lies!, threatening the thrusts 11 ... Qd5 or 11 ... Qf5, Black gains time for his development) 11 Qf2 Qg6 12 Qe3 Qc7 and in connection with the prospective simplify-

ing thrust 13 ... ♖c5. Black achieves equality:

(b) 7 ♖e3 (the aim of such development is to prepare a diagonal 'tandem' in the event of an exchange in the centre, directed at the weakened b6 square and attempting to blockade his opponent's queenside. However, the position of the bishop on e3 also has its dark side, which can be exploited by Black for counterplay) 7 ... ♜xd4 8 ♝xd4 b5!? 9 ♙g2 ♜c6 10 ♞d2 (the thrust 10 ♞b6 would be inadvisable here) 10 ... ♙b7 11 0-0 ♚e5!? (the c4 point is generally weak in this variation, and with the bishop on e3 this factor has special significance!) 12 ♞d4 f6 13 ♞ad1 ♙e7 (13 ... ♞c8!?) 14 ♙f4 ♞c7 15 ♚e2 ♞d8 16 c3 0-0 and Black has conveniently solved all of his opening problems (Lirindzakis-Krnic, Athens 1981);

(c) 7 ♙f4 (this method of development is directed at increasing influence on the d6 point, however in the present situation this idea does not justify itself) 7 ... d5!? 8 ♜xc6 (or 8 ed ♜xd5) 8 ... bc 9 ♙g2 ♙g6 10 ♙e3 ♞a5 11 0-0 ♞b8!? 12 ♞b1 ♙b4 and Black has active play.

Therefore it becomes clear that it is hardly possible to devalue the idea of unloading, which comprises one of the chief motifs in the

Taimanov system, by prophylactic half-measures.

The text game also supports this conclusion.

7 ... ♜xd4
8 ♝xd4 ♜c6
9 ♞d1

The problem of choosing a retreat square for the queen is not simple and it determines one of the chief problems with White's opening construction. On d1 the white queen does not obstruct the diagonal for the development of the dark-squared bishop, but takes the natural square away from the rook. Let us examine other possibilities:

(a) 9 ♞d3 (the queen occupies quite an active position here and, importantly, does not hinder the freedom of development on the queenside. However, the position of the queen on d3 is shaky — it finds itself in Black's 'zone of range' — and White must contend with the possibility of the thrusts ... ♚e5 or ... ♚b4, facilitating the creation of counterplay for Black) 9 ... ♙e7 10 ♙f4 (or 10 ♙e3 ♞c7 11 f4 d6 12 0-0 0-0 13 ♞ad1 b5 14 a4 ba 15 ♜xa4 ♞b8 with equal chances; Kholmov-Lerner, Tallinn 1983) 10 ... d6 11 0-0-0 ♚e5 12 ♞d4 ♞c7 13 ♙e3 0-0 14 ♞b6 ♞c6!? and, in association with the threats of 15 ... ♚c4 or 15 ... ♙g4, Black has a comfortable

game (Diaz-Sangyinetti, Biel 1976);

(b) 9 ♞e3 (with this retreat White's strategic goal becomes the fianchetto of the second bishop also, which, incidentally, solves the problem of control over the c4 square. But the release of the pressure on the d-file and on the d6 square simplifies Black's defence) 9 ... d6 (also good is 9 ... ♙e7 10 0-0 0-0 11 b3 ♙f6 12 ♙b2 ♙d4!?) Nicevsky-Doda, Polanica Zdroj 1971) 10 0-0 ♙e7 11 b3 0-0 12 ♙b2 ♙f6 (12 ... ♞b8 13 ♚e2, b5 14 ♞ac1 ♞a5 is also possible, as Karpov played against Hort in San Antonio 1972) 13 ♞fd1 ♞c7 14 ♚a4 (Keres recommended 14 ♞d2!?) 14 ... ♙xb2 15 ♜xb2 e5!? 16 ♚c4 ♙e6!? and Black has fully level play (Keres-Jansa, Sarajevo 1972);

(c) 9 ♞d2 (this is akin to the example previously examined — White intends the flank development of his queen's bishop also, but in this case maintaining pressure on the d-file. But Black may use the a7-g1 diagonal for counterplay here) 9 ... b5 (9 ... ♙e7 10 b3 0-0 11 0-0 b5 12 ♙b2 ♙b7 13 ♞fe1 d6 is less convincing) 10 0-0 ♙b7 11 b3 ♙c5!? 12 ♙b2 0-0 13 ♚e2 (on 13 ♞ad1 not only 13 ... d6 is possible, but also 13 ... ♞b6!?) 13 ... e5!? 14 ♞ad1 d6 15 ♚c1 a5 16 ♚d3

♙b6 and Black has an active position (Hamani-Razuvayev, Caracas 1976).

So each of the queen retreats has its positive and negative sides, with not one guaranteeing an opening advantage.

9 ... ♙e7
10 0-0 0-0
11 ♙e3

It may be better to prevent the development of a Black initiative on the queenside by way of 11 a4, but then also after 11 ... ♞c7 12 ♞e2 ♚a5 Black has excellent play.

11 ... b5

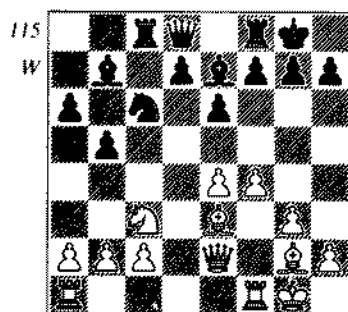
11 ... ♞c7 is also possible, as I played against Cortlever at Wijk aan Zee in 1970. After 12 ♚e2 b5 13 ♞d2 ♙b7 14 c3 ♚e5 15 ♙f4 d6 16 b3 ♞fd8 17 ♞ac1 ♞ac8, Black obtained an excellent position.

12 f4

The tactical blow 12 ♚d5!? is also worth considering, although after 12 ... ed 13 ed ♙b7!? 14 dc ♙xc6 15 ♙d4 ♞c8 16 c3 ♞e8 17 ♞e1 ♙f8, it is hardly possible for White to elicit an advantage from his somewhat better pawn configuration (Faibisovic-Taimanov, Leningrad 1973).

12 ... ♙b7
13 ♞e2 ♞c8

The opening dispute may now be summarized. As is usual in the Taimanov system, outwardly



White's position looks highly attractive — he has an active position in the centre with harmonious development. But one cannot help but notice that Black's dynamic resources in the current situation are perhaps wider than in traditional schemes with the development of his opponent's light-squared bishop on the f1–a6 diagonal. The absence of necessary control over the c4 point is telling and facilitates the undertaking of concrete queenside action by Black.

14 ♖f2!?

Now this is an inaccuracy, leading to serious consequences. Mnatsakanian hopes to prevent Black from developing an initiative, particularly with the dangerous transfer of the knight from c6 via a5 to c4. But this plan does not achieve its goal, and therefore just turns out to be a loss of time, which is particularly significant

in such a complex double-edged situation. 14 ♖ad1 ♘a5 15 ♗h1 ♘c4 16 ♙c1 would be better, maintaining a dynamic balance.

14 ... ♘a5!?

The crux of the whole matter! It is clear that White's intended thrust 15 ♙b6 would be a 'striking at water'. In this event Black is left with the pleasant choice between transferring to a promising endgame by way of 15 ... ♗xb6! 16 ♗xb6 ♙c5+ 17 ♗xc5 ♖xc5, or developing an initiative in the middlegame by means of 15 ... ♗e8! with the subsequent 16 ... ♘c4 (16 ♙xa5?? is impossible due to 16 ... ♙c5).

However, White does not have a sufficient antidote for the dangerous transfer of the knight to c4.

15 ♘d1

Such defensive manoeuvres are not brought about by positive factors. But what can be done?

15 ... ♘c4

16 ♙d4 f6!

This outwardly modest move, which contains the positional threat of the advance 17 ... e5, is the most convincing way to emphasize the disharmonious piece configuration in the opponent's camp. The 'proud' centralized bishop on d4 suddenly becomes an object of anxiety for

White.

17 e3

Of course, it hurts to acknowledge the error of the 14th move operation, but the chess battle demands fortitude and therefore it would now be logical to submit to the necessity of a switch to difficult defence and continue 17 ♗e2 e5 18 ♙f2, in order to repair the coordination of forces and secure the important dark-squared bishop.

17 ... e5

18 ♙a7 ♗c7

19 ♗h1

As before, the g1–a7 diagonal tactical motifs play a significant role. White has to contend with the threat of 19 ... ♖a8 and 20 ... ♖xa7. At the same time 19 ♘e3 doesn't suit in view of 19 ... ♙xc4!

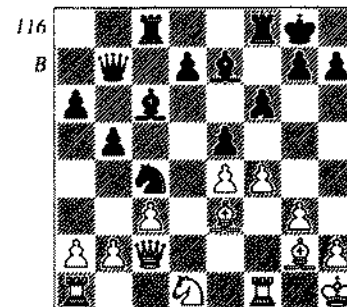
19 ... ♙c6!?

A typical 'Sicilian spring' in action. The dynamism of Black's pieces permits him to modify his offensive resources. Just now the threats were felt along the dark diagonal, now they arise along the light one. Black plans to exert perceptible pressure on the e4 pawn by way of 20 ... ♗b7.

20 ♙e3

A sad return, but there is nothing better now. In the event of 20 b3 ♘d6 21 ♖e1 ♗b7 22 ♗e3 e3 23 gf f5! White's position breaks up.

20 ... ♗b7
21 ♗c2



21 ... d5!

A typical ploy. Having disunited the hostile forces, Black opens up the game with decisive effect.

22 ed ♙xd5

23 ♙xd5+ ♗xd5+

24 ♗g2 ♖fd8

25 fe?

This slip, of course, hastens the inevitable, but it is obvious that matters are also lamentable for White after 25 ♗xd5+ ♖xd5 26 ♖e1 ♖cd8.

25 ... ♗xg2+

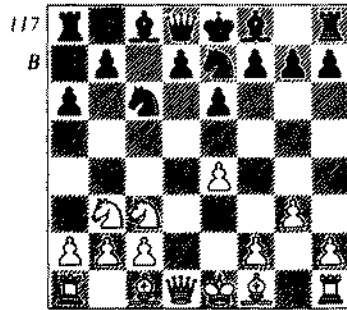
26 ♗xg2 ♖xd1!

White resigns.

The 'Taimanov' mechanism, typical of Black's flank activity, worked perfectly in this game. Black's opening plans did not turn out so cheerfully in the next game, where his opponent skilfully and opportunely placed difficult barriers in his path.

R. Byrne–Taimanov
Leningrad Interzonal 1973

1	e4	c5
2	♘f3	♙c6
3	d4	cd
4	♙xd4	e6
5	♙c3	a6
6	g3	♙ge7
7	♙b3	



As the reader is now familiar with the section, we move on to the question 'and if the unloading is hindered?'. The withdrawal of the knight from the centre, which prevents the simplifying exchange and emphasizes the disharmonious position of the knight on e7, is one of the most radical 'anti-Taimanov' motifs. In the current situation of the planned flank development of the bishop, it is even more advisable, perhaps, as the white queen is freed for an eventual transfer to the kingside along the unoccupied d1–h5 diagonal, and the g3 pawn may limit

the black knight's radius of action on its conventional transfer to the g6 square.

Note, incidentally, that another form of this idea has been tried in practice — the retreat of the white knight to e2, but this appears ineffective. Here is a characteristic example:

7 ♙de2 ♙g6 (also possible is 7 ... b5 8 ♙g2 ♙b7 9 0-0 ♙c8!? 10 f4 b4 11 ♙a4 ♙b6 12 c3 ♙xa4 13 ♗xa4 ♗b6+ 14 ♖h1 ♙e7 15 cb ♙xb4 16 ♚d1 0-0, as was played in the game Ozanic–Taimanov, Vinkovci 1970) 8 ♙g2 ♙c5! 9 0-0 b5 10 ♙f4 (on 10 ♖h1 then 10 ... ♙ge5!? is good for Black) 10 ... ♙b7 11 ♙d3 ♙b6 12 a4 b4 13 ♙a2 a5 14 c4 d6 15 b3 ♙d4!? 16 ♙b2 ♗b6 and Black obtains a superior position (Kapengut–Taimanov, USSR Ch. 1971).

7 ... b5

The 'programmed' flank activity — Black intends to mobilize his forces according to the scheme ♙c8–b7, ♙e7–c8 and ♙f8–e7 and prevents the clamping thrust 8 a4. However, as practice has shown it is not so simple to achieve such a harmonious deployment of forces, and the delay in the mobilization of forces may tell, therefore preference is given to the continuation 7 ... d6 in the newest interpretation of this scheme, to

which we shall return. To complete the picture other ideas must also be considered, each of which has had their own adherents at various times but none surviving the test of time:

(a) 7 ... ♙g6 (this habitual manoeuvre is inadvisable in the current situation. The knight has few prospects here and Black runs into difficulties) 8 ♙g2 (the more resolute 8 h4!? also warrants consideration. After 8 ... d6 9 h5 ♙ge5 10 f4 ♙d7 11 ♙e3 White's game is clearly better; Szmetan–Zapata, Buenos Aires 1978) 8 ... b5 9 0-0 ♙e7 10 ♙d5!? ♙b7 (or 10 ... ed 11 ed ♙b7 12 dc ♙xc6 13 ♙xc6 dc 14 ♗f3!?) 11 ♙xe7 ♗xe7 12 a4 b4 13 a5 0-0 14 ♙e3 d6 15 ♚e1 ♙ge5 16 ♗e2 and White's position is clearly preferable (Short–Holm, Plovdiv 1983);

(b) 7 ... ♙a5 (the main aim of this manoeuvre, which incidentally, the attentive reader is already familiar from similar positions — is to 'concede' the e6 square to its 'colleague', with the knight relocating on c4. However this idea involves a loss of time and, moreover, with the transfer of the knight from the kingside to the queenside — ♙g8–e7–c6 — the cover of the castled position of the black king may turn out to be insufficiently secure) 8 ♗h5!? (the most energetic riposte! On 8

♙g2 ♙ec6 9 0-0 ♙e7 10 ♙f4 d6, or 8 ♙f4 ♙ec6 9 ♙d6 ♙xd6 10 ♗xd6 ♗e7 11 ♗c7 ♗d8 Black's problems are simplified) 8 ... ♙ec6 (8 ... b5 may be more solid, although here also after 9 ♙xa5 ♗xa5 10 ♙g2 ♙b7 11 0-0 ♙c6 12 ♙f4 ♙e7 13 ♙d5! ed 14 ed 0-0!? — otherwise Black is subjected to a dangerous attack — 15 dc ♙xc6 16 c3, White has a positional advantage; Timman–Andersson, Holland 1978) 9 ♙g5!? ♗c7 10 ♙f4!? d6 11 ♙xa5 ♙xa5 12 0-0 ♙c6 (on 12 ... ♙d7 comes the very strong 13 e5 and if 13 ... d5 then 14 ♙xd5! ed 15 e6) 13 ♗c5! dc 14 ♙xc7 and White's advantage in the endgame is obvious (Timman–Andersson, Tallinn 1973).

8 ♙g2 d6

Of course the immediate 8 ... ♙b7 does not work in view of 9 ♙c5 (incidentally, one more argument in favour of White's opening formation).

9 f4!?

A highly energetic continuation. White unequivocally makes it clear that his advantage in the centre, in connection with the eventual continuations e4–e5 or f4–f5 with a lead in development, may become an important factor in the struggle for the initiative. However, 9 0-0 is also a good plan, as Estrin played against Taimanov

(Albania 1974). After 9 ... ♖b8 (in the event of 9 ... ♗d7? is the strong 10 ♗xd6! ♖d5 11 ed ♗xd6 12 dc) 10 ♗e3 g6 11 f4 ♗g7, by way of 12 ♗d2!? (12 e5 de 13 ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 14 ♖ad1+ ♖c7 15 ♗c5 f5! 16 ♗d6+ ♖b6 17 ♗xb8 ♖xb8 18 fe ♗xe5 turns out to be less convincing) 12 ... ♖b7 13 ♖ad1 ♖d7 14 f5! a dangerous attack can develop.

9 ... ♗b7
10 ♗e3 g6

Black now senses the necessity to achieve the mobilization of his forces on the kingside and as a result must rebuild his plans. So far as his intended manoeuvre 10 ... ♖c8 (with the idea of 11 ... ♗e7) is dangerous due to the strong reply 11 f5!? (11 ♗e2 ♗e7 12 0-0-0!? is also good), he strives to strengthen his castled position by the method of fianchettoing his dark-squared bishop, although now the d6 square is perceptibly weakened.

11 ♗d2 ♗c7

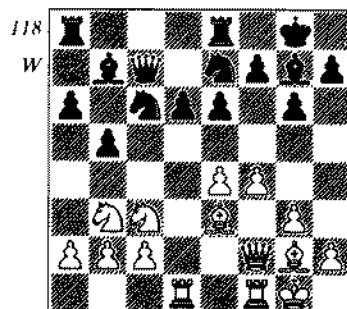
How difficult development becomes! The natural 11 ... ♗g7 does not suit in view of 12 0-0-0 ♖c8 13 e5!

12 ♗f2

This tempting manoeuvre gives Black some respite. 12 0-0-0!? is more energetic and consistent and only in the event of 12 ... ♖d8 — 13 ♗f2. White's opening advance

would then become apparent with even more effect.

12 ... ♗g7
13 0-0 0-0
14 ♖ad1 ♖fe8



The moment has arrived to sum up the opening battle. Alas, this time it is unfavourable for Black. Although he has completed his development, the weakness of the d6 pawn and the dark squares on the queenside limits his customary counterplay. Without having made any significant mistakes, Black is left in a difficult position, and now the reliability of the entire system is in question! Fortunately, the case is not quite so dramatic and, as we shall see in other examples, a different interpretation of the variation fully re-establishes its reputation. But here the root of the trouble is determined by a backwardness in development and the weaknesses of the position, caused earlier by the

excessively optimistic advance 7 ... b5, the root cause of subsequent difficulties.

15 ♖d2

To blame Robert Byrne for handling the position in the classical spirit — doubling his rooks on the open file for the siege of the d6 pawn — as they say, 'does not hold up', but it is well known (and we are repeatedly convinced of this!), that Sicilian constructions, perhaps as no others, demand dynamic and concrete decisions — time is particularly dear here. That is why 'explosive' central operations — 15 e5, should be preferred to the slow development of pressure, guaranteeing White a significant positional advantage in the event of the sacrifice being accepted: 15 ... de 16 ♗b6 ♗c8 17 ♖c5!; or declined — 15 ... d5 16 ♗b6 ♗c8 17 ♖c5.

15 ... ♖c8

Now, at last, Black can breathe easily. On 16 e5 he has the sufficiently solid reply 16 ... ♖d8 and, in the event of 15 f5, 15 ... ♖e5.

16 a3

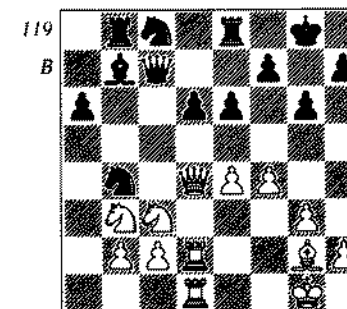
All of this is of excessively restrained style. In any event the move 16 ♖fd1 would be preferable and more consistent.

16 ... ♖b8!?

The situation gradually changes — Black can now con-

template counterplay along the b-file also.

17 ♖fd1 b4!?
18 ab ♖xb4
19 ♗d4 ♗xd4
20 ♗xd4



The picture of battle has been sharply transformed literally in a few moves. White's slowness has lost him the initiative completely. Three of his major pieces are set against the d6 pawn, easily defended by a single knight, and the other pieces are now deprived of their former prospects. Conversely, Black's forces gain in mobility and dynamism!

20 ... ♗a8
21 ♗f1

An invitation to peaceful negotiations, which would be possible after 21 ... ♖xc2 22 ♖xc2 ♖xb3 23 ♗xa6 ♗b6. However, this is now insufficient for Black.

21 ... e5!

A typical Sicilian counter-attack. Its target is clear — the e4 pawn.

- 22 fe ♖xe5
23 ♜f2!?

Sensing that the scales are beginning to tip towards his opponent, Byrne finds a chance to set a concealed trap, the craftiness of which is strengthened by impending time-trouble.

- 23 ... ♙xe4?

Surprising naivety! It would be impossible to imagine that a player could simply 'let slip' a pawn. Fatigue apparently tells (as it often does!) from previous tense duels and a loss of vigilance is experienced regarding the happy overcoming of difficulties. Black's impulsive blunder is all the more silly as he has several attractive methods of strengthening his position at his disposal — 23 ... ♜e7, 23 ... ♙g7 and even 23 ... h5.

- 24 ♙xe4 ♖xe4
25 e3 ♙c6?

Played in that same state of 'blissful ignorance'. There were still possibilities of pulling back from the edge of the precipice by the tactical operation 25 ... ♙c2! 26 ♙d3 (or 26 ♖xc2 ♖xb3 27 ♙xa6 ♙e7) 26 ... ♙e3!

- 26 ♙c5!

A blow of fearful force!

As Chekhov said: 'A gun, hanging on the wall, must be

eventually fired'. The knight, having eyed the c5 square throughout the entire game, gets there all the same and now its value decides the fate of the battle.

- 26 ... dc

There is no choice. Both rooks are under fire — one directly, the other indirectly (27 ♙xa6).

- 27 ♖d7 ♜xd7
28 ♖xd7 ♖e7
29 ♖d1

All appears well ... But over-tension and the nervousness of the players, which the dramatic contest has led to, make themselves felt.

- 29 ... ♙8a7

Objectively, 29 ... ♖e5 30 ♙xa6 ♙8e7 would be stronger.

- 30 ♙xa6 ♙e5
31 ♙f1?

31 ♜xc5 seemed impossible to Byrne (yes, of course, and to me also!) in view of 31 ... ♖xb2 32 ♜xe7 ♙f3+ with a draw, but the intermediary check 32 ♖d8 changes the whole picture.

- 31 ... c4
32 ♙g2?

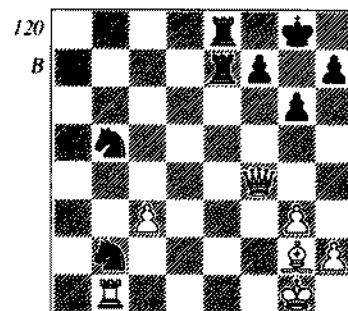
Staggering! It is as though Byrne is inviting his opponent to a new round of battle. By retaining control of the d3 square, he could have realized his material advantage without any particular problems.

- 32 ... ♙d3

- 33 ♜d4 ♙b5!

Apparently, this thrust had escaped the attention of my opponent.

- 34 ♜xc4 ♙xb2
35 ♜f4 ♖be8
36 ♖b1



- 36 ... ♙d3?

One more illustration of the rule — 'the one who makes the last mistake loses!' Black still had excellent chances of saving this long-suffering game by continuing 36 ... ♙xc3! 37 ♖xb2 ♖e1+ 38 ♙f1 (38 ♙f2? ♙d1+) 38 ... ♙e2+ 39 ♖xe2 ♖8xe2, after which it would be difficult for White to activate his forces. So, for example, in the event of 40 ♜c4 (the threats of 40 ... ♖b2 and 41 ... ♖bb1 must be met), Black can probably even transfer to an ending with an unusual correlation of forces by way of 40 ... ♖xf1+ 41 ♙xf1 ♖xh2.

Now though it is all over.

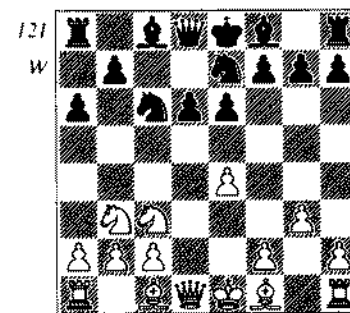
- 37 ♜d2 ♙a3
38 ♖a1 ♖e1+
39 ♖xe1 ♙xe1
40 ♜d7 ♖e2
41 ♙d5

Black resigns.

I succeeded in revenging the experiences of my opening disappointments in this game (of course, after significant analytical work) the following year.

Romanishin-Taimanov
USSR Ch. 1974

- 1 e4 c5
2 ♙f3 e6
3 d4 cd
4 ♙xd4 ♙c6
5 ♙c3 a6
6 g3 ♙ge7
7 ♙b3 d6!?



As practice has shown, it is precisely this restrained method of development that most answers the demands of the complicated

anti-Taimanov variation. Black primarily sets his aims on building a flexible defensive construction according to the scheme ♗c8-d7 , ♘e7-c8 , ♙f8-e7 and $0-0$, so as to enter into characteristic operations on the queenside only after he has harmoniously concluded the mobilization of his forces and basically guaranteed the safety of the approach to his camp.

8 ♙g2

The immediate attempt to hamper Black on the queenside by way of 8 a4 is also worth considering, although this usually leads to the main variation by an insignificant transposition of moves. Note only that on $8 \dots \text{b6}$ 9 ♙g2 neither $9 \dots \text{♗d7}$, in view of 10 ♜xd6 ♗d5 11 ed ♗xd6 12 dc ; nor $9 \dots \text{♗b7}$, due to 10 0-0 ♗c8 11 f4 ♗e7 12 f5! (Jansa-Taimanov, Brno 1975) should be played; the correct continuation is $9 \dots \text{♜c7}$.

8 \dots ♗d7

9 $0-0$

9 ♜xd6 is not of course possible due to $9 \dots \text{♗d5}$. This tactical subtlety also permits Black to place his pieces according to his planned scheme.

9 \dots ♗c8

This usual manoeuvre immediately solves two major problems — it unblocks the kingside for the completion of development and allows the establishment of

control over the weakened $d6$ and $b6$ points. Besides which, the knight can often be re-routed from $c8$ for active operations on the queenside via $c8-b6-c4$.

10 a4

An important moment. Before commencing characteristic (for this variation) action on the kingside, it is advisable for White to spend a tempo on prophylactically limiting his opponent's active resources on the opposite side of the board. In the game Romanishin-Hartock (Amsterdam 1973), Romanishin tried to do without this idea. However after the direct 10 f4 ♗e7 11 ♗e3 0-0 12 ♜e2 he was forced to contend with the counterplay — $12 \dots \text{b5}$ 13 a4 b4 14 ♗d1 ♜c7 — and the struggle immediately developed a double-edged character.

10 \dots ♗e7

Black consistently carries out his projected plan of quickly mobilizing his forces, not fearing the blockading of his queenside. The alternative is the prophylactic move $10 \dots \text{b6}$, with the probable continuation 11 f4 ♗e7 12 ♗e3 0-0 13 ♜d2 (or 13 ♜e2 ♜c7 14 ♗ad1 ♗f6) $13 \dots \text{♜c7}$ 14 ♗ad1 ♗d8 15 g4 ♗b8 , after which play on the two flanks takes an extremely complicated turn (Rajna-Taimanov, Budapest 1973).

11 a5

White could hardly count on an opening dividend if he were to decline this opportunity of increasing his influence on the queenside. For example, 11 ♜e2 0-0 $12 \text{ ♗e3 ♗a5!?$ 13 ♗xa5 ♜xa5 14 ♗d4 ♗d8 15 ♗fd1 ♗c6 and Black has a comfortable game (De Firmian-Zapata, Tunis 1985).

11 \dots $0-0$

12 ♜e2

The continuation 12 ♗e3 ♗f6 13 ♜d2 is of approximately equal value.

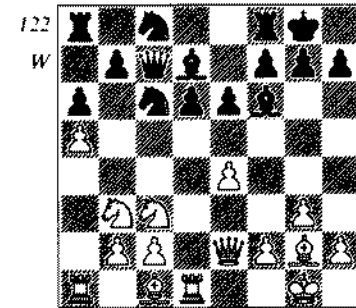
12 \dots ♜c7

13 ♗d1

13 ♗e3 has also been tested. After $13 \dots \text{♗f6}$ ($13 \dots \text{♗b4!?$ 14 ♗fe1 b5 is also interesting, as played in the game Vogt-Jansa, E. Germany 1976) 14 ♗a4 ♗e5 15 ♗b6 ♗xb6 16 ♗xb6 ♜b8 Black's position appears constrained, but in connection with the possibility of the activation of forces on the queenside (the c-file!) he does not have bad prospects of developing counterplay (Bokhosian-Radev, Bulgaria 1976).

13 \dots ♗f6

A critical position, important for the evaluation of the opening achievements of either side. It is clear that White has succeeded in occupying space and, importantly, stopped Black's characteristic queenside counterplay at its roots.



But at the same time Black has achieved much — he has successfully mobilized his pieces, fortified the approach to his camp and has assumed control over a wide zone of 'neutral' territory in the centre. These factors provide the basis to recognize that Black's dynamic potential in this complicated situation fully compensates for his concessions in space. The Sicilian 'mainspring' is ready for operation.

14 ♗e3!

A significant error, which allows Black to immediately enter into concrete active operations.

14 ♗d2 is sharper, as Makarichev played against Romanishin at Sochi 1983. But also in this case, after $14 \dots \text{♗e5}$ $15 \text{ ♗f1 b5!?$ 16 ab ♗xb6 17 ♗a5 ♗fc8 , Black obtains fully equal play. Therefore, perhaps, 14 ♜c4 is best of all for White with mutual chances.

14 \dots ♗xc3!

Breaking up his opponent's

pawn chain. Black gains important outposts for his pieces, and for this there is no regret in parting with his powerful bishop.

- 15 bc ♖e5
16 ♗d4 ♘c4

This knight now takes the most honourable role.

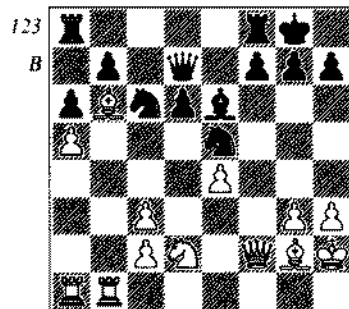
- 17 f4

17 ♗d2 obviously will not do in view of 17 ... ♗xa5, and on 17 ♗f1 there is the strong 17 ... ♗b5.

- 17 ... e5
18 fe ♖xe5

Yet another outpost has been won and now White has to contend with the thrusts 19 ... ♗g4 and 19 ... ♗b5, and his pawn structure is only worsening ...

- 19 ♗f2 ♗g4
20 ♖db1 ♖e7
21 ♗d2 ♗7c6
22 h3 ♗e6
23 ♗b6 ♗d7
24 ♖h2



What a striking metamorphosis in comparison with the previous diagram! White's position is completely disharmonious — his pawn chain is smashed, his pieces deprived of mobility and he has simply no active prospects whatsoever. Meanwhile, Black dominates the centre and his forces are served by dynamism. It is not surprising that new resources for the development of the initiative turn out at his disposal.

- 24 ... f5!

The 'x-ray' of the black rook to the white queen makes itself felt.

- 25 ♗e3

There is nothing better now. On 25 of the simple 25 ... ♗xf5 would follow with decisive threats. But the white queen is not safe on its new square either.

- 25 ... ♖ae8
26 ♖f1

Here it is hard to give advice, but could 26 ♗d4 have been more solid?

- 26 ... ♗c4!

There is no respite whatever for the opposition!

- 27 ♗xc4 ♗xc4
28 ♖f2 d5
29 ♖d1 ♖f7!

Black now achieves his first material gain, and very importantly, does not part with the initiative for this.

- 30 e5

Otherwise 30 ... fe with even more effect.

- 30 ... ♖xe5
31 ♗f4 ♗e6
32 h4 h6
33 ♗h3 ♗e7

Unnecessarily cautious. The energetic 33 ... ♖e4 is the quickest route to victory. But even so, Black's advantage is indisputable.

- 34 h5 ♖e4
35 ♗d2 ♖e5
36 ♖g2

If 36 ♗xf5 then 36 ... ♖xf5! 37 ♖xf5 ♖e2+ decides.

- 36 ... ♗g4!?

With opposite-coloured bishops Black's attack becomes irresistible.

- 37 ♗xg4 fg

- 38 ♖xf7 ♗xf7
39 ♖e1

There is now no way out.

- 39 ... ♗xh5
40 ♗c7 ♗f5
41 ♖e3 d4!
42 ♖xe4

Or 42 cd ♗f1+ 43 ♖h2 ♗d5!

- 42 ... ♗xe4+

and Black forces victory.

Here I would like to bring the section on my 'stock' system to a conclusion on an optimistic note. I trust that the richness, depth and variety of its strategic motifs and, finally, its originality, providing a wide sphere of creative fantasy, will guarantee the Taimanov system a good reputation, interesting analyses and long viability.

Postscript

Thus, I have shared with you, my reader, my many complex experiences of one of the most popular and substantial openings of our day — the Sicilian Defence. It has taken decades to understand, sense and evaluate the true worth of the original, multi-varied and complex ideas which lay in this opening construction, to penetrate its distinctive strategic principles and to master its typical tactical methods.

But neither these decades of analytical work, nor its practical trials can suffice to deeply understand the Sicilian Defence to its full capacity. It is indeed inexhaustible. On the fringes of comprehensive knowledge remain such schemes as the 'Scheveningen variation', the 'Najdorf system', the 'Dragon variation' and several others. Truly, 'it is impossible to grasp the immensity'. Nevertheless, having accumulated even part of this incalculable theoretical richness I, to the extent of the long

exciting events of my chess life, feel sufficiently equipped to boldly enter into the creative dispute with the most worthy opponents and rivals. The fact is that comprehension of the strategic and tactical content, even if limited to the sphere of the Sicilian Defence, allows one to skilfully orienteer and find acceptable solutions in other Sicilian constructions, which are both insufficiently explored and not so well known. As with all the multi-complexities and sub-variations of this opening, the fundamental conception of it as a whole is the leitmotif of Black's problems, which is determined by the asymmetric construction, the principles of active flank counter-play and the maximum dynamism of forces.

These principles should also become 'Ariadne's clue' for the inquisitive reader in the intricate, though fascinating labyrinth of variations of the Sicilian Defence.

Index of Variations

1 e4 c5 2 ♘f3 ♘c6 3 d4 cxd4 4 ♘xd4

The Rauzer Attack

4 ... ♘f6

5 ♘c3 d6

6 ♗g5 e6

7 ♖d2 ♗e7

7 ... a6 8 0-0-0 ♗d7 9 f4 ♖c8 32

9 f4 ♗e7 10 ♘f3 32-36

10 f5 36-39

9 f4 h6 10 ♗xf6 40

10 ♗h4 40-44

8 0-0-0 0-0

8 ... ♘xd4 9 ♖xd4 0-0 10 e5 18

10 ♗xf6 18

10 f4 h6 18-22

10 f4 ♖a5 23-25

9 ♘b3

9 ♗xf6 9

9 ♘db5 9

9 f4 26-30

9 ... ♖b6

10 f3 10-13

10 ♗e3 10

10 ♗f4 10

10 ♗xf6 14-17

The Boleslavsky System

4 ... ♘f6
 4 ... a6 53-57
 5 ♘c3 d6
 6 ♗e2 e5
 7 ♘b3
 7 ♗f5 46
 7 ♘db5 46
 7 ♘xc6 46
 7 ♗f3 49-52
 7 ... ♗e7 40-48

The Paulsen System

4 ... e6
 5 ♘c3
 5 c4 60
 5 ♘xc6 60
 5 ... a6
 6 ♗e2
 6 ♗e3 ♗c7 7 ♗d3 b5 76-80
 7 ♗d3 ♘f6 96-99
 6 ... ♗c7
 7 0-0
 7 a3 61
 7 f4 b5 8 ♗e3 61
 8 a3 61
 8 ♘xc6 ♗xc6 9 0-0 62
 9 ♗f3 ♗b7 10 e5 62-63
 10 ♗e3 64-66
 7 ♗e3 67-73
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 8 a3 82-83
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 9 ♘a4
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 9 ... ♗e7 91-95
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 9 ... d5 87
 9 ... b5 87
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 9 ... 0-0 10 c4 87
 10 ♘xc6 87-91

The Taimanov System

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 6 ♗e2
 6 g3 ♘ge7 7 f4 129
 7 ♗e3 130
 7 ♗f4 130
 7 ♗g2 129-133
 7 ♘de2 134
 7 ♘b3 ♘g6 135
 7 ♘b3 ♘a5 135
 7 ♘b3 b5 134-139
 7 ♘b3 d6 139-143
 6 ... ♘ge7
 7 ♗e3
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7 **fb3** 124-127

7 ...

7 ... **b5** 102

8 **fxd4**

8 **fxd4** 102

8 ...

8 ... **fc6** 103

fxd4

b5 103-107

